MONDAY
April 17, 2023

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Fabricated case, says Delhi CM

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SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN TIES

A new sort of regional alignment

Rise of China, decline of American influence

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SUPERLATIVE BATTING

Ishan, Suryakumar shade Venkatesh's ton

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Shettar resigns as MLA, may join Cong.

Former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar submitting his resignation as MLA to Speaker Vishweshwara Hegde Kageri on Sunday. PTI

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Jagadish Shettar, who has rebelled against the party for denying him the ticket for the Assembly elections, not only tendered his resignation as a legislator on Sunday but also formally met senior Congress leaders to clear the decks for his entry into that party. The Congress is said to be keen to include Mr. Shettar into its fold to send a clear message that the BJP has not shown due respect to leaders from the Lingayat community that has been its main support base.

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U.P. govt. forms judicial commission to investigate killing of Atiq, brother

The panel, led by retired High Court judge, will have to submit report in two months; while Opposition terms the shooting a failure of law and order in the State, some BJP Ministers term the deaths 'divine justice'; three accused in judicial custody

The Hindu Bureau
PRAYAGRAJ/LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Sunday set up a three-member judicial commission to inquire into the killing of gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed and his brother, Khalid Azim, aka Ashraf, whose last rites were held late in the evening amid heavy security.

Ahmed and Azim, both accused in the Umesh Pal murder case, were shot dead by three men on Saturday night as police personnel were escorting them to a hospital in Prayagraj for a check-up.

The commission, headed by retired Allahabad High Court judge Arvind Kumar Tripathi, will have to submit its findings to the government within two months. Retired judge Brijesh Kumar Soni and former Director-General of Police Subesh Kumar Singh are the other members.

Security ring: Police personnel standing guard outside Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital in Prayagraj on Sunday, where the post-mortem examination of Atiq Ahmed was conducted. V.V. KRISHNAN

On Sunday morning, the authorities suspended mobile and broadband Internet services across Prayagraj and deployed security personnel in sensitive areas to maintain law and order.

Soon after the murders, the police invoked Section 144 of the Criminal Code Procedure, prohibiting the assembly of more than four persons.

Opposition leaders demanded a court-monitored probe into the killings, which took place in the presence of police personnel and TV cameras, describing it as a failure of law and order. They also demanded the dismissal of the Yogi Adityanath government. However, the State government claimed that the shooters were not checked because they posed as mediapersons, while some Ministers termed the deaths "divine justice".

A Prayagraj court sent the three accused to judicial custody for 14 days. The shooters were identified as Arun Maurya, 18, from Kasganj; Lavlesh Tiwari, 22, from Banda; and Sunny Purane, 23, from Hamirpur.

Lavlesh and Sunny have criminal backgrounds and are facing charges of attempt to murder, assault, molestation, and others.

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NEARBY

Rahul fears BJP may play spoilsport

KOLAR
Happy that the Congress remained a united force in its fight for elections, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday expressed fears that the BJP would use corruption money to bring down the government. » Page 4

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Text&Context

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NEWS IN NUMBERS

A rise in power consumption in 2022-23, says the CEA

9.5 In percentage. From 1,374.02 billion units (BU) in 2021-22, power consumption grew to 1,503.65 BU in 2022-23, owing to higher demand amid rise in economic activities, according to the Central Electricity Authority (CEA). PTI

Bilateral trade between U.S. and India rises in FY23

7.65 In percentage. Commerce Ministry data showed that trade between India and the U.S. increased to $128.55 billion in 2022-23 as against $119.5 billion in 2021-22 on account of increasing economic ties between the countries. PTI

People suffered heat strokes in Bhushan award ceremony

123 people. Due to exposure to sunlight during the mega event in Navi Mumbai, where social activist Dattatreya Narayan was given the Maharashtra Bhushan award, many suffered from issues like dehydration and were hospitalised. PTI

The total amount seized since Karnataka polls announcement

170 In ₹ crore. The Election Commission said that the confiscations which include ₹71 crore in cash, liquor worth ₹38 crore, and freebies worth ₹19 crore, were made based on the model code of conduct that came into force on March 29. PTI

Islamic State militants kill civilians in the outskirts of Hama

26 people. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a media group based in Britain, informed that the people were killed while they were foraging for wild truffles in Syria's Hama region. AP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Need to do more: An Indian tiger and its young cubs in Ranthambore national park in Rajasthan, India in 2018. ADITYA DICKY SINGH

On democratising tiger conservation

Many scientists were happy that Project Tiger at fifty years was able to hold on to tiger populations in most of the geographical regions where they existed at its inception. However, in the 2023 preliminary report, for the first time, we find that this hold is slipping away

FULL CONTEXT

Abi T. Vanak
Raghu Chundawat
Joanna Van Gruisen

"It is like a big safari park," a Russian scientist working on Siberian tigers whispered conspiratorially to us after his first visit to the Ranthambore National Park in 1996. From his point of view, the Russian far-east was "real" wilderness. To him, all our National Parks and Tiger Reserves were little more than glorified zoos or safari parks. But is this necessarily the reality of conservation in a country with 1.4 billion people? A country that still boasts of having a remarkable conservation history, with robust populations of large carnivores such as tigers and leopards, the only populations of the Asiatic lion and greater one-horned rhinoceros, and the largest population of Asian elephants.

Much of the success of wildlife conservation in India has been attributed to the Wild Life (Protection) Act (WLPA), enacted 50 years ago by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to arrest the alarming decline of wildlife across the country. But as we celebrate 50 years of the Act, and of the marquee Project Tiger that helped bring back our national animal from the brink of extinction, we also need to reflect on what needs to change with respect to conservation practices in India, so that we can preserve these wins and plan ahead for challenges in the next 50 years.

"Conservation amnesia"

The tiger number released, on April 11, 2023, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is the minimum estimate based on the tigers photographed during the survey. The final numbers will come in the next few months; authorities have indicated a 6% annual growth rate, so the expected number would be approximately 25-30% above the previous 2018-2019 estimate of 2,967 tigers. Fifty years ago, India's alarming revelation that tiger numbers had dropped below 3,000 shocked the world. India reacted by banning hunting and drafting one of the world's strongest legal frameworks to protect its natural heritage. Fifty years later, more or less the same number is now met with celebration.

In science, this syndrome of shifting baselines is known as "conservation amnesia". By mentioning only the figure of 1,400+ estimated in 2006, wildlife managers are able to celebrate the doubling of the tiger population. However, if one looks at the long 50 years of tiger conservation under Project Tiger, we will see that while we have held onto the population, the numbers do not reflect a great success despite political support, funds, and a strong legal framework.

Then again, just numbers do not paint the full picture. Many scientists, while not impressed by the figures, were happy that Project Tiger was able to hold on to tiger populations in most of the geographical regions where they existed at its inception. However, in the 2023 preliminary report, for the first time, we find that this hold is slipping away. We are now losing tigers from Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, the Eastern ghats and from the Northeastern forests. With it, we lose genetic diversity unique to these geographical regions, dashing hopes of maintaining long-term population viability and natural recovery. A tool that is increasingly being used to thwart this reduction is to reintroduce tigers from central Indian forests, where the populations are thriving, as was done for the Panna and Sariska Tiger Reserves. However, if this is done too often, re-introduction will homogenise tiger genetic structure across the country. This needs to be looked at more seriously, and future reintroductions need to be planned in a way that can maintain as much genetic diversity as possible.

An umbrella that shades too much

The tiger was considered an "umbrella species". Saving the tiger meant saving the entire ecosystem. Tigers in India occur in a wide range of habitat types, from the evergreen forests of the Western Ghats to the Terai grasslands of the Himalayan foothills; from the tropical dry forests of Rajasthan to the mangroves of the Sundarbans. Given the inherent differences in such habitat types, it is inevitable that not all of them will support similar densities of tigers.

Habitats that boast the highest tiger numbers are typically those with a high prey abundance. Therefore, the idea was to save species across all ecosystems using the tiger as an 'umbrella'. But in the absence of proper scientific oversight, the focus stayed on boosting tiger numbers rather than their habitat and concomitant species. The most common interventions were to manipulate ecosystems so that they could support high densities of the tiger's principal prey species. In most cases, this involved improving habitat for the cheetal, a mixed feeder that thrives in the 'ecotone' (a transition area between two biological communities) between forests and grasslands. It also required provisioning water. This has resulted in the "cheetalification" of tiger reserves.

For example, in the Kanha Tiger Reserve, the explosion in the cheetal population resulted in the habitat becoming unsuitable for the endangered hard ground barasingha, which depends on tall grass. Managers then had to create exclosures free of cheetal so that the barasingha could reproduce and their numbers recover.

In other parks, the excessive provisioning of water during the dry season led to reduced natural, climate driven variations in populations of wildlife. This is likely to have unknown and unintended consequences for these habitats in the long-term.

On decentralising conservation

Conservation in India depends entirely on a network of Protected Areas (PAs). This is an exclusive conservation model and suffers from a "*sarkaar*" complex. This is ironic because the innate tolerance of Indians for wildlife is generally credited with the success of conservation. However, ordinary Indians, especially those who live closest to wildlife, and who often pay the price for it, have very little say in conservation.

The WLPA is a restrictive law. It describes in great detail what you can't do. However, the law and associated policies have done very little to enable conservation. That is, there is no policy framework and incentive for ordinary citizens to aid in conservation – be it for tigers or for any other species. As a result, conservation has not reached beyond these PAs. In other countries, natural lands are owned or managed by individuals, communities, farmers, ranchers, corporates, charities, and the government. Each one of them is incentivised to conserve these lands according to their interests. As a result, several conservation models operate simultaneously. But in India, all natural habitats are managed by one agency and therefore the approach to conservation is singular, and exclusive.

We need to have frameworks that allow local communities, citizens, scientists, non-governmental organisations, and businesses to participate meaningfully in conservation. For example, large tracts of forest land are "Reserved Forests" under the jurisdiction of the "territorial" wing of State Forest Departments. Such areas can be co-managed with an inclusive approach which also provides economic benefits for local communities. Indeed, in many landscapes, degraded agricultural lands adjoining these forest areas can be restored to enhance connectivity between PAs, and further afield forest patches can act as "stepping stone" reserves for tigers and other large mammal movements in our increasingly human-modified environment.

We are now in the fifth four-year cycle of tiger-population monitoring. Yet we lack a vision document that examines these figures critically and provides a way forward for the next 20 years. We are in a race against time to prevent further fragmentation and degradation of existing natural habitats. Only by extending the reach of conservation beyond our present PA system and empowering local communities and ordinary citizens to meaningfully participate in conservation can we hope to achieve an actual doubling of tigers and other embattled wildlife.

Abi T. Vanak is Director, Centre for Policy Design, ATREE, Bengaluru. Raghu Chundawat and Joanna Van Gruisen are with Baavan - Bagh Aap Aur VAN, Madhya Pradesh.

THE GIST

- Much of the success of wildlife conservation in India has been attributed to the Wild Life (Protection) Act (WLPA), enacted 50 years ago by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to arrest the alarming decline of wildlife across the country.
- The 2018-2019 tiger number was 2,967 tigers. By mentioning only the figure of 1,400+ estimated in 2006, wildlife managers are able to celebrate the doubling of the tiger population. However, if one looks at the long 50 years of tiger conservation under Project Tiger, we will see that while we have held onto the population, the numbers do not reflect a great success despite political support, funds, and a strong legal framework.
- We need to have conservation frameworks that allow local communities, citizens, scientists, non-governmental organisations, and businesses to participate meaningfully.

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J BG-BGE

NCMC gets a lukewarm response from metro users

Despite 5.9 lakh Namma Metro passengers, only 100 use the National Common Mobility Card to travel every day; many are likely to shift to it only after BMTC also starts accepting the card

Suchith Kidiyoor
BENGALURU

It has been 15 days since Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) started issuing the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC), but the response remains lukewarm so far.

Since March 30, a total of 1,434 persons purchased the card that is on an average 119 cards per day. Among the cardholders, nearly 100 passengers use the card to travel every day.

It is said that a majority of the metro passengers have been using Namma Metro smart cards and they are likely to shift to the NCMC only after the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) also starts accepting it. "Holding one more card to travel just in Namma Metro does not make much difference," said a source.

After commercial operations between K.R. Pura and Whitefield began, the average ridership of Namma Metro touched 5.9 lakh during the weekdays and crossed over 6 lakh during the weekends. FILE PHOTO

After the commercial operations between K.R. Pura and Whitefield began, the average ridership of Namma Metro touched 5.9 lakh during the weekdays and crossed over 6 lakh during the weekend. Among the passengers, 60% of them use the Namma Metro smart cards to commute, 39.5% use the tokens purchased at the counters, and the remainder use group tickets and others.

Since March 30, a total of 1,434 people purchased the National Common Mobility Card. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sources said close to 21,000 passengers use the QR-based ticket system to travel in Namma Metro.

"Since commissioning of the Namma Metro services, the BMRCL has been issuing smart cards (closed loop card) for its passengers. In Bengaluru, these cards are being used by lakhs of passengers. Last year, the BMRCL had also launched a QR-based ticket system for the benefits of the passengers. These initiatives were well received by the passengers. Those who are holding Namma Metro smart cards may not immediately shift to the NCMC as it cannot be used in other modes of transport in the city limits. Once the BMTC puts in place the required infrastructure to accept the NCMC, there will be huge demand for it."

Lack of training

Passengers complain that at the counters of metro stations they do not get the proper information about purchasing the NCMC and its benefits.

Ramya S., a metro passenger, said, "Recently, I visited a counter at Cubbon Park station to purchase the NCMC. When I enquired about the card, a staff member told me that I have to make an online registration. I asked her to share details. She directed me to another counter. There too the staff was clueless. I returned without buying the card."

Admitting that passengers are facing problems at the counter, an official said, "In future, we will take all steps to train our staff to issue the cards and share details sought by the passengers. We will also rope the issuer bank to train the staff."

The BMRCL earlier shared information that the commuters can buy RuPay NCMC across the counters of any metro station and at RBL Bank branches in the city. The commuters can purchase an NCMC by submitting a KYC form available at counters and paying a minimum amount of ₹100 of which ₹50 will be in the form of recharge.

The passengers can also purchase by entering the minimum KYC details by visiting nammametro.ongo.co.in or Namma ONGO mobile app.

After registration, one has to visit the ticket counter at the stations to receive the card.

"Since these are bank issued card waiting times for issuing NCMC is around 3 minutes for self-registered passengers. For those who want to purchase the card at the counters it takes 10 minutes to complete the formalities related to KYC as per the RBI guidelines," said a source.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, APR. 17	
RISE 06:06	SET 18:32
RISE 03:58	SET 16:05
TUESDAY, APR. 18	
RISE 06:06	SET 18:32
RISE 04:40	SET 17:00
WEDNESDAY, APR. 19	
RISE 06:05	SET 18:33
RISE 05:22	SET 17:55

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	25
Mysuru	36	24
Bengaluru	36	22

Bengaluru Today
36°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be very warm and uneasy. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist & haze. Day will be very warm and uneasy. Night also will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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Park and recreation: Residents start online petition against new rules in Cubbon Park

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After the Horticulture Department enforced rules, such as vacating the park on time and the ban on littering, and restrictions on public display of affection by couples at Cubbon Park, residents have started an online petition asking authorities to roll back the new rules.

The petition started on Jhatkaa.org said that the rules seem like ways of moral policing masked under the guise of safety. More than 1,000 people have signed the petition online which will be submitted to the department soon.

Recently, security guards at Cubbon Park have been tasked with keeping an eye on "inappropriate behaviour" by couples. Under the new measure taken up by the Horticulture Department, the guards are provided with megaphones to inform people to maintain decorum inside the park.

A Horticulture Department official said the new rules were announced since the department received several complaints from families. K. MURALI KUMAR

"We now have security guards blowing whistles and blaring instructions on loudspeakers to the groups they think are violating these bizarre rules. Does that seem like the quiet, green space we Bangaloreans yearn for?," the petition questioned.

Rajender Kumar Kataria, Principal Secretary, Horticulture Department, had said that the new rules were announced since the department received several complaints from families, especially those with children, frequent walkers and senior citizens, that they were feeling uncomfortable walking in the park as couples were often found in indecent situations at some corners.

He further said another reason why people were being asked to keep away from such places was that there had been sightings of snakes in some remote corners. "We do not want any accidents to happen," Mr. Kataria said.

However, the petition stated "the above comments seem like ways of moral policing masked with the excuse of safety. Cubbon Park should have more waste bins and instructions so visitors can throw their food waste in segregated bins."

Poll code puts the brakes on Bharat Gaurav Kashi Darshan trains

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In November, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Bharat Gaurav Tourist train from Bengaluru

Denial of permission by the Election Commission has forced the Karnataka government to cancel two trips of Bharat Gaurav Kashi Darshan special trains for pilgrims.

The Department of Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments in a press release stated that as per the directions of the commission, two trips scheduled on April 14 and 28 have been cancelled.

The department started accepting bookings from March 25 through the portal of the Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC).

Three destinations

After the model code of conduct came into effect, the State government had approached the Election Commission seeking permission to operate the train to Varanasi, Ayodhya, and Prayagaraj from various points in the State.

The Election Commission directed the State government to immediately stop the booking for the scheduled trips. The commission had imposed the model code of conduct with effect from March 29.

In November, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Bharat Gaurav Tourist train from Bengaluru.

The State government tied up with IRCTC to provide the service. As per the decision of the State government, a special discount of ₹5,000 was offered per person booking the tickets. The ticket price is ₹20,000 per person.

After the service was launched in November, three trains have been operated under the scheme so far.

Two trains in November and one in February ferried a total of 1,644 passengers. While announcing the plan, officials had said that the eight-day tour package will include seminars, lectures, group meetings as well as visits to the Vishwanath temple and centres of important cultural heritage in Varanasi, Prayagraj, and Ayodhya.

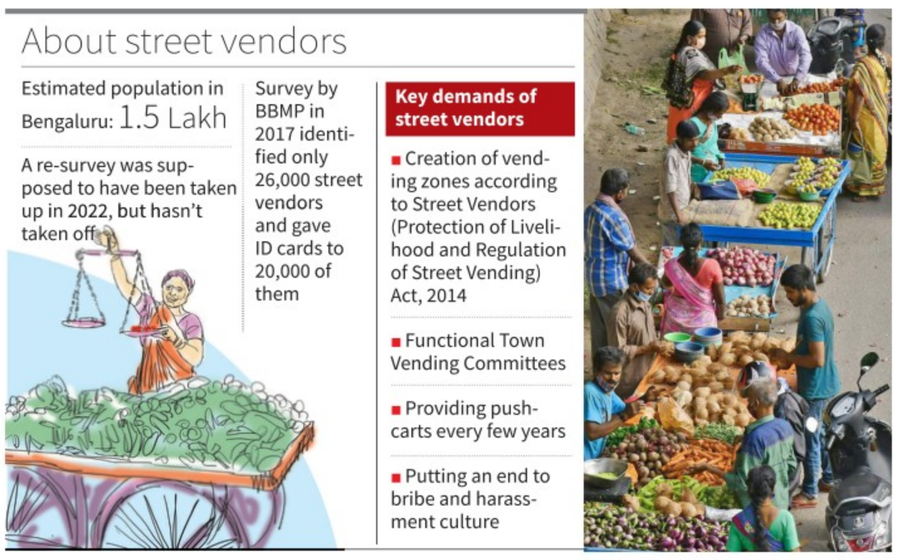
The department was authorised to utilise ₹7 crore sanctioned for the Kashi Yatra.

Karnataka polls: Nothing is more important for street vendors than vending zones

Jahnavi T.R.
BENGALURU

Despite the emergence of malls and supermarkets, street vendors and hawkers are still an integral part of the city life, thanks to their presence in every locality and their affordable prices. According to estimates, there are around 1.5 lakh street vendors in Bengaluru and yet, for this sector, their long-standing demand, to provide dedicated vending zones, has not been implemented. Despite The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, that provides security for them to conduct their trade, they continue to be subjected to arbitrary evictions by civic and traffic police officials often.

"If we have to conduct our business on the street, we have to bribe everyone starting from the beat constable, civic official to followers of councillors and MLAs. This can be avoided only if we are given an ID card by the civic body and permanent vending zones identified and allotted for us," Basavaraj, a vendor in Vijayanagar market.


About street vendors
Estimated population in Bengaluru: 1.5 Lakh
A re-survey was supposed to have been taken up in 2022, but hasn't taken off
Survey by BBMP in 2017 identified only 26,000 street vendors and gave ID cards to 20,000 of them
Key demands of street vendors
Creation of vending zones according to Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014
Functional Town Vending Committees
Providing push-carts every few years
Putting an end to bribe and harassment culture

If we have to conduct our business on the street, we have to bribe everyone. This can be avoided only if we are given an ID card by the civic body and permanent vending zones identified and allotted for us.

BASAVARAJ,
A vendor

Implementing the Street Vendors Act, 2014, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) conducted a survey in 2017. "It was so shoddy that it identified only 26,000 street vendors as against an estimated 1.5 lakh. Of them, only 20,000 have been given ID cards," said Vinay Sreenivasa, an activist with the Beedi Badi Vyaparigala Sanghatane.

Karnataka Votes 2023

This has affected the street vendors in many ways. For instance, the Union government has implemented the Pradhan Mantri Street Vendors Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PMSVANidhi), under which street vendors can avail a loan of ₹10,000. However, only identified street vendors with ID cards can avail the scheme.

The city has failed to meet the targets set by the Centre for the scheme due to the shoddy survey in the city. As against a target of 80,000 beneficiaries in 2022, the city only has 26,000 identified street vendors. The Act stipulates that such a survey should be taken up every five years. In 2022, Chief Civic Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath told *The Hindu* that a new survey would be taken up, but it hasn't been done till date. Though the BBMP called a tender for the survey, it did not see many participants and has failed to take off.

"The civic body has to form town vending committees which have to meet every three months to demarcate vending zones. In two of the eight zones of the city, the committees have only not been formed and even in those zones where committees have been formed, vending zones haven't been demarcated. To all this, a survey bringing all street vendors into the net is key. The government that will come to power now has to treat this as a pressing issue and implement the provisions of the Street Vendors Act, 2014 in full letter and spirit," said S. Babu, president of Bengaluru Urban District Street Vendors' Federation.

(This is the sixth part of a series on what people want - people from sectors whose voices are often unheard, and who are not on the top of priorities in votebank politics)

Fraser Town's 'Ramzan Food Mela' opposed

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Residents of Fraser Town have written to the police and the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike(BBMP) asking them to put a stop to the famous 'Ramzan Food Mela', citing traffic snarls and garbage piled up on Mosque Road.

Members of the Fraser Town Residents' Welfare Association (FTRWA) in the letter to the BBMP, the police, and the traffic police, requested them to stop the mela immediately.

"The Ramzan Food Mela has no religious importance and none of the residents nor mosque authorities are in favor of such an event. We don't even take part in organising nor we take part in shopping. On the contrary, we, the residents, shop owners, people who pray during Ramzan, are greatly disturbed," the letter stated. "The street shops have been opened by outsiders and the people who flock to eat here are also from outside. We have lost the serenity of our area and request your good selves to bring an immediate stop to such an event," the letter added.

Text & Context
A weekday feature on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and a quiz. In the latest issue (April 17, Monday), the following article is available:

- Can we democratise tiger conservation in India?
bit.ly/tigerconservationnow

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CACHE

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Why did Twitter allegedly block access to tweets with Substack links?

Substack has 35 million active subscriptions to writers on the platform, including more than two million paid subscriptions. Twitter has also been trying hard to get more subscribers to its own Blue subscription since its launch in November 2022

Nabeel Ahmed

On April 8, users of the digital newsletter platform Substack reported they could not like or retweet Twitter posts with Substack links. Users complained they could not add tweets to their Substack newsletter unless they were added as screenshots. Twitter also stopped returning searches for Substack on the platform. Twitter CEO Elon Musk denied claims of blocking access to tweets embedded with Substack links. Mr. Musk's denial came after independent journalist and author Matt Taibbi blamed Twitter for blocking the sharing of links to his articles on Substack. Twitter later removed the restriction on Substack links, and stopped censoring searches for the term 'Substack.'

What is Substack?
Substack, launched in 2017, is an online publishing platform that lets writers and podcasters publish and share content directly with their target audience. The platform allows content creators to generate income directly from subscribers on their terms. For readers and listeners, the platform provides an easy way to access content and support individual creators based on users' needs and preferences.

How is Substack connected to Twitter?
Susbtack content creators look to social media platforms to create additional engagement with readers and listeners. It also helps them grow their audience base. Creators post links on Twitter, Facebook, and other prominent social media for interested users to subscribe to and follow posts regularly. These links are used to redirect users to content published on Substack, driving online traffic toward the original content published on the platform.

How did Twitter make it difficult for users to access Substack links?
Substack alleged that embeds and authentication of links had stopped working on Twitter. Meanwhile, users on Twitter complained that Substack links on Twitter were marked as possibly "unsafe." Users also raised complaints that they struggled to like or retweet Twitter posts that had Substack links. Some users said they could not add tweets to their Substack newsletters unless they took screenshots. Twitter users also reported seeing results with "newsletter" when searching for Substack on the platform.

How many people subscribe to Substack?
Substack is a younger platform compared to Twitter and, in recent times, has seen a surge in popularity with a million active users in November 2021, according to Statista. The newsletter platform claims it has 35 million active subscriptions to writers on the platform, including more than two million paid subscriptions.

Why did Twitter block its links?
Though their business models differ, Twitter has been trying hard to get more subscribers to its own Blue subscription since its launch in November 2022. Meanwhile, according to Statista, Twitter's own monthly active user base as of December 2022 stood at 368 million worldwide. And the platform is expected to witness a drop in its monthly active user to around 335 million users in 2024.

This comes at a time when Twitter's revenue from top advertisers has fallen sharply in recent months following its takeover by Elon Musk. In March 2023, Twitter reportedly witnessed a drop of 40% year-over-year in both revenue and adjusted earnings for December 2022. The platform also saw a decline of 71% in advertising during December 2022, according to advertising research firm Standard Media Index.

It seems that Twitter does not want users to migrate to other platforms through links shared via tweets or retweets. It wants to ensure users spend more time on the platform which in turn boosts its position to increase advertising revenue.

What is Substack Notes?
Substack on April 5, three days before Twitter started censoring links, announced it would be launching its short-form content platform called Notes. The company shared that Notes will provide users with a platform to post short-form content while using recommendations to drive discovery across the platform.

Notes will come with features for users to publish brief posts, and quotes along with reactions, images, and links. Substack says Notes will run on paid subscriptions and not ads, unlike other social media platforms. However, its short-form content seems to pit it as a rival to Twitter, a microblogging format, which is also actively looking to increase its paid subscriber count.

Does Twitter allow sharing links?
While Twitter has not been against sharing links to other platforms, things seem to have changed since Elon Musk took over the company's reins in October 2022.

In December 2022, Twitter, in a post, said it would no longer allow users to promote their presence on other social media platforms. These included Facebook, Instagram, Mastodon, Truth Social, Tribel, Nostr, and Post. Twitter, in the post, said it would take action against users that violate the policy "at both the Tweet level and the account level," according to a report from *The Verge*.

Twitter also said that while any type of cross-posting was not a violation of the policy, even from prohibited sites, it would allow paid advertisements and promotions for any of the prohibited social media platforms.

Twitter, after facing backlash, reversed the policy within 48 hours of being implemented with an apology from the CEO. Twitter later deleted the link announcing the policy.

Do linkless tweets perform better on Twitter?
While Twitter does not actively state whether its algorithms penalise tweets with links, an experiment from Hootsuite, a social media management platform, suggests that linkless tweets garner more engagement than those with them. The experiment did say that engagement for tweets with links could be lower as they require action on the part of users but showed that engagement for linkless tweets with shorter messages outperformed those with links.

An analysis of Twitter's algorithms using the GPT-4 browsing feature by Rowan Cheung, founder of Rundown, an AI newsletter, also hinted that users should avoid using excessive links in their tweets. Especially ones from non-news or media sites. However, whether this is due to Twitter's algorithms or user preferences cannot be conclusively established.

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

They bicker all day about the new books

One of them was prohibited from taking any books from the library as he does not return them

S. Upendran

What is the difference between 'argue' and 'bicker'? (V. Advaith, Chennai)

When you 'argue' or 'bicker' with someone, there is a difference of opinion. Of the two, 'argue' is the more frequently used word. When we imagine two people arguing, the picture that immediately comes to mind is that of the individuals shouting at each other rather angrily; tempers flare because each has a very different opinion about the matter being discussed. But not all arguments need to be emotional; there can be arguments where the two parties do not lose their temper. They discuss the matter in a civilised manner, and try to persuade each other into changing their existing beliefs.

The newly married couple were arguing about which restaurant to go to.

'Bicker' has a much more limited meaning than 'argue'. When two people 'bicker', they usually shout and scream at each other about something very petty. In other words, the quarrel or argument in this case is usually about something rather silly or trivial. Unlike 'argue', there is nothing dignified about 'bickering'.

The kids were bickering over who should clean the room.

Is it okay to say, 'The suspended students were prohibited to enter the university'? (K. Neethu, Kumbakonam)

No, it is not. One does not 'prohibit someone to do something', one always prohibits someone 'from doing something'. It is always 'prohibit from' and not 'prohibit to'. When you prohibit someone from doing something, you are preventing him from doing it; it is possible that you are ordering him not to do it. When you say that the suspended students have been prohibited from entering the university, what you are suggesting is that they have been banned from entering. Should they enter, they will be punished. By the way, the word is pronounced 'pro-HI-bit' with the stress on the second syllable.

The new rule prohibits players from talking to the media.

Is it okay to say, 'bed-coffee' and 'bed-tea'? (S. Prabha, Hyderabad)

These are terms frequently used in India. When you have 'bed-tea', you usually have your beverage before you brush your teeth. In fact, you drink your tea while you are still in bed. A few standard dictionaries do list 'bed-coffee' and 'bed-tea'; those that do, highlight the fact that they are examples of Indian English. Native speakers do not use these terms. They prefer to say, 'coffee/tea in bed'.

There's no way I'm having breakfast in bed. I need to brush my teeth.

upendrankye@gmail.com

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Five years ago, the King of Swaziland renamed his country "Eswatini". Here is a quiz on countries and how their names have changed over the years

Srinivasan Ramani

QUESTION 1
This land-locked country in West Africa gained full independence from France in 1960 and has retained its new name since 1984, which loosely translated means "the land of upright people". Prior to '84, it was named after the "upper" part of its main river system. What is the new and old name of the country?

QUESTION 2
Between 1971 to 1997, this country was known by the Kikongo (Bantu language) word phrase meaning "the river that swallows all rivers". It was also during that period ruled by a ruthless dictator who changed his name as well. His African name translates to "the all-conquering warrior, who goes from triumph to triumph". Name the country (current name, previous name) and the dictator.

QUESTION 3
Originally named after a British mining magnate, this country chose to name itself by its current name, which was first used by African nationalist Michael Mawema. Name the country and its old name.

QUESTION 4
In the Nama (non-Bantu African language) language, this country's name means "vast place" and is derived from a name proposed by a freedom fighter named Mburumba Kerina. Prior to independence it was known as German South West Africa. Name the country.

QUESTION 5
After achieving its independence in 1981, by what name does the country which was named British Honduras prior to that, known now?

Visual question:
This country (flag in picture) was originally called the "New Hebrides Condominium". Now it goes by what name? WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Questions and Answers to the April 14 edition of the daily quiz: 1. This animal from this book is the mentor of an abandoned child. **Ans: Bagheera (black panther) in *The Jungle Book***
2. This creature, native to the Arctic region, was presented as a birthday gift to a young boy and remained a close and loyal friend of his until its death in the last book of the series. **Ans: Hedwig**
3. In this epic, the eponymous hero leaves this puppy to go to war and when he returns years later, the puppy, now a full-grown dog, dies as soon as it sees him. **Ans: The dog's name is Argos from Homer's *Odyssey***
4. This author wrote a book about a goat which belongs to an old couple. The author was recently longlisted for the International Booker Prize this year. **Ans: Perumal Murugan**
Visual: This man was a British conservationist who wrote about 40 books. **Ans: Gerald Durrell**
Early Bird: Sonali Jha Chatterjee

Word of the day

Fleece:
rip off; ask an unreasonable price; shear the wool from sheep

Synonyms: shear, surcharge, overcharge, hook, pluck, plume, rob

Usage: *He fleeced the people by posing as an insurance agent.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/fleecepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /fli:s/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

To read or not to read

With World Book and Copyright Day coming up, an English teacher makes a case for the teaching of original texts in Literature classes

Albert P' Rayan

"Have you read Graham Greene's The Power and the Glory?" I asked a post-graduate Literature student. "Did you like the character of the whiskey priest? Why do you think he remains nameless despite being the protagonist?"

"Sir, I haven't read the original novel but only a summary from a guide...," was the answer.

GETTY IMAGES/ ISTOCK PHOTO

This was almost two decades ago when Ramji Lal's "guides" and "bazaar notes" were extremely popular among Literature students. Nearly all relied on such simplified and student-friendly books to pass their exams. In fact, some professors even surreptitiously used these "guides" to prepare for their lectures. Some teachers and students even boasted about using CliffsNotes Literature study guides, which were summaries and analyses of works of literature prepared by native English speakers.

Recently, when I spoke to students of Literature in prestigious colleges, it came as no surprise when some of them said that the practice of reading only "notes" is quite common. The only difference is that, due to easy access to the Internet, they rely on online resources to find such materials on various websites.

Why do many students choose not to read original (unabridged) books? Why have abridged versions of novels become so popular? Do students miss out on something valuable when they rely solely on abridged versions and study guides to prepare for their exams? There is a fundamental difference between reading books for exams and reading for pleasure. There could be various reasons why many Literature students do not read original works, including the lack of a reading habit, an absence of any perceived necessity to do so, exams not being challenging, or easy access to online resources.

Critical appraisal

In order to grasp and appreciate a writer's literary style, it is imperative to read their original works. For instance, Graham Greene is renowned for his concise writing style, characterised by the absence of unnecessary words and complex sentence structures. A critic once commented on the readability of Greene's writing: "Nothing distracts Greene from his primary goal of capturing the reader's attention." Additionally, his style is known for its cinematic qualities, as he had a fondness for and was good at writing screenplays.

Commenting on the writing style of J.M. Coetzee, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 2003, a critic writes, "His writing is simple, clean, and straight to the point, but don't be fooled - underneath that straightforward veneer, his words reveal some really complex ideas and emotions." If Greene's and Coetzee's works are presented in an abridged format, literature enthusiasts may miss out on the beauty and depth of his works.

Though some purists oppose using abridged versions in class, many teachers believe that such versions can boost the confidence of struggling readers and can be used as graded readers. Once readers attain adequate proficiency in the target language, they are more likely to be motivated to read unabridged books. But students of literature at the tertiary level should read unabridged (original) works in order to make a critical judgement of literary works.

Edits on classics

Recently, publishers have brought out edited versions of books by popular authors such as Roald Dahl. The latest editions of Dahl's books contain a notice on the copyright page stating that the language has been reviewed to ensure it can be enjoyed by all today. Offensive and sexist terms have been replaced with sensitive equivalents.

However, the act of editing and rewriting books to suit a specific purpose does not do justice to the author. Teachers have a responsibility to sensitise students about improper or offensive language and enable them to understand the context in which certain terms were used. Effective teaching of Literature involves encouraging students to critically appreciate and analyse a piece of literature, rather than simply ignoring unpleasant aspects.

The writer is an ELT resource person and education columnist.
rayanal@yahoo.co.uk

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INBRIEF

Vijayendra faces protest during campaign

Shikaripur BJP candidate B.Y. Vijayendra, son of former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, faced protests by residents of Banjara hamlet at Taralaghatta in Shikaripur taluk on Sunday. As the candidate entered the village along with his supporters, men, women and youth of the village, raised slogans against Mr. Vijayendra, B.S. Yediyurappa, alleging that the BJP government did injustice to the Banjara community by implementing the internal reservation among the Scheduled Castes. They shouted "Tanda bachao, BJP hatao", as Mr. Vijayendra went along the streets. He and his followers left the village.

Total seizures by Election Commission touch ₹170 crore

The total seizures by the Election Commission of India including cash and gift articles as well as liquor since March 29 have touched ₹170 crore. This includes mere cash seizures to the tune of ₹3.92 crore on April 15. According to a release by the commission, a total of 1,410 FIRs too have been filed in this regard so far.

ATF for declaring voting booths tobacco-free

The Anti-Tobacco Forum (ATF) has urged the Deputy Commissioner of Mysuru and District Election Officer K.V. Rajendra to declare all the voting booths as tobacco-free. In a statement here, ATF convener Vasanthkumar Mysoremath said the election officials should also keep the storage places of EVMs/VVPATS tobacco-free.

BSY has no moral right to talk about us, says Savadi

Laxman Savadi, who joined the Congress after quitting the BJP, said that former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa had no moral right to comment on him or Jagadish Shettar. "I have quit the BJP as my self-esteem was hurt. Mr. Shettar has announced he will do the same as he has suffered humiliation. But Mr. Yediyurappa not just quit the party, but formed another party to counter the BJP that made him the Chief Minister. He should not talk about our defections," Mr. Savadi told journalists in Athani on Sunday. He was responding to Mr. Yediyurappa's criticism of Mr. Savadi and Mr. Shettar.

Rahul fears BJP will use corruption money to topple future Congress govt.

He appeals to people for 150-seat mandate and urges leaders to implement the four guarantees announced by party soon after coming to power

Sharath S. Srivatsa
KOLAR

(Clcokwise from top) Former AICC president Rahul Gandhi speaking at the Jai Bharat Satyagraha; supporters at the event; Mr. Gandhi with AICC president M. Mallikarjun Kharge, and Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Kharge with KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar and former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Kolar on Sunday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Happy that the Congress remained a united force in its fight for the Assembly elections on May 10, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday expressed fears that the BJP would use its corruption money to bring down the government.

"I am happy that Congress is fighting the elections unitedly. We will form the government. However, BJP will try to use '40% commission' money to destabilise the government. This is the money that was stolen from you (public). They will use your money to destabilise the government voted by you," he said, addressing the Jai Bharat Satyagraha at Kolar.

"That is why Congress should be given 150-seat mandate to prevent the corrupt government from coming to power again," he added. The Congress government will be pro-poor, pro-farmers and pro-labour. While Modi government has been pandering to Adani, the Congress will allow access to banks for poor, women, youth and farmers, Mr. Gandhi said.

He also urged local Congress leaders to implement the four guarantees announced by the Congress in the first Cabinet session after coming to power. "Karnataka public should give a message to the country. Your message should be to Prime Minister Narendra Modi," the Congress leader said.

AICC president M. Mallikarjun Kharge said, "I want the Congress to come power. Don't bother about the chief ministerial debate but think about bringing in the system. Party legislators will decide on the Chief Minister." He urged voters to give Congress a 150-seat victory while removing the corrupt BJP government led by Basavaraj Bommai. "It's not an impossible task," he added.

'ADANI IS SYMBOL OF CORRUPTION'

» PAGE 9

From Page One

Shettar resigns as MLA, may join Congress

Already, another Lingayat leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi has quit the BJP and joined the Congress after being denied ticket from Athani. Sources said that senior Lingayat leaders in the Congress --- former Ministers Shamanur Shivashankarappa and M.B. Patil --- are involved in getting Mr. Shettar to the Congress. Incidentally, Mr. Shettar's son is married to Mr. Shivashankarappa's granddaughter while Mr. Shivashankarappa's another granddaughter is engaged to Mr. Patil's son.

Late on Sunday night, AICC general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala, party leaders Siddaramaiah, D.K. Shivakumar, and Mr. Patil met Mr. Shettar at the residence of Mr. Shivashankarappa's son S.S. Ganesh in Bengaluru to discuss his entry. Earlier in the day, the 67-year-old Mr. Shettar, who is a six-time MLA, met Speaker Vishweshwara Hegde Kageri at the latter's residence in Sirsi and submitted his resignation as MLA. He told presspersons that he had decided to quit the BJP. "There is no looking back. I will not reconsider my decision," the former Chief Minister said.

The BJP high command had rushed emissaries, including Karnataka poll in-charge Dharmendra Pradhan, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi to Mr. Shettar's house to placate him. However, their attempts to convince him to retire from the poll fray to make way for others did not succeed.

Soon after the party sensed that Mr. Shettar was determined to quit the BJP and join the Congress, the BJP roped in veteran leader B.S. Yediyurappa to lash out at him.

Mr. Yediyurappa said that the party had offered to give ticket to a member of Mr. Shettar's family and promised to give him some other post. But Mr. Shettar had declined the offer.

Reacting sharply to this, Mr. Shettar maintained that Mr. Yediyurappa had been pressured by the party to attack him.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi and senior leaders like Amit Shah do not know what is happening on the ground. It seems as if some local leaders do not want the BJP to come back to power. They are misleading the national leaders," Mr. Shettar said.

BSY leads attack on Shettar and Savadi; calls their move 'betrayal' and 'unpardonable'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

BJP leader B.S. Yediyurappa addressing a press conference in Bengaluru on Sunday. With him is Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party fielded Lingayat strongman and former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa to attack former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar and former Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi, both Lingayats from Kittur Karnataka, who have resigned as legislators upset over BJP denying them ticket.

"The party has given all opportunities possible to Mr. Shettar and Mr. Savadi. Mr. Shettar was even now promised to be made a Minister in the Union government. But still he has resigned and is all set to join the Congress. This is against the ideology he has been committed to all these decades. This is unpardonable," Mr. Yediyurappa said.

He said the decision of the two defectors was a "betrayal of not just the party but even the people who recognised them because of the BJP".

Mr. Yediyurappa lashed out at the Congress for "creating a fake narrative that Veerashaiva-Lingayats were being sidelined in the party" and appealed to the community not to heed such "fake narratives".

"The party has always stood with Veerashaiva-Lingayats and given their due and will continue to do so even in the future. I resigned as Chief Minister out of my own volition to make way for young blood and was not forced by anyone," he said.

Ample opportunities

Mr. Yediyurappa launched a scathing attack on Mr. Shettar and Mr. Savadi. "Mr. Shettar comes from a family associated with the Sangh Parivar from Jan Sangh days. The party has given him ample opportunities – he was made Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, party president, Minister, Speaker in the Assembly and even Chief Minister. What else could the party have given him?," he questioned.

He said Mr. Shettar was offered a Rajya Sabha seat with a promise to be made a Union Minister while one of his family members be fielded from his seat.

"The party hasn't asked Mr. Shettar to retire. It has only asked him to make way for young blood, like I did," he said, trying to counter Mr. Shettar's allegation that the party had "gracelessly" asked him to retire. He also attacked Mr. Savadi and said he was made an MLC and Deputy Chief Minister despite losing his seat in 2018 and that he had promised Mr. Savadi that he would be made a Minister in the new government, he said.

The former Chief Minister said he would tour the entire State including constituencies of Mr. Shettar and Mr. Savadi, "expose them and tell the truth to the people". "I am touring the State working for the party even at 80 years of age. K.S. Eshwarappa, S. Angara and Raghupati Bhat, who have also been denied ticket, have set a great example for party workers. When a leader like Narendra Modi is leading the country, we should work for it irrespective of whether we get any positions or not," Mr. Yediyurappa said.

On KJP

Responding to a question on him quitting the party and forming the Karnataka Janata Party (KJP) in 2013, Mr. Yediyurappa termed it an "unpardonable mistake of his life" which he corrected and had already apologised for. "If these leaders also realise their mistakes and return to the party fold, I will welcome them and will rehabilitate them," he assured.

Exit of Lingayat leaders may set a new narrative

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

> Lingayats are not treated as the core of BJP, but merely a vote bank. Karnataka will witness a new massive political churn because of how Lingayats were mistreated by the BJP & specifically 'Two Vested Common Interests'. Lingayats are set to return home to the Congress in 2023.
>
> **M.B. Patil**
> Congress leader

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, which had been relishing the Veerashaiva-Lingayat support for nearly two decades now, suddenly finds itself in a tight spot ahead of the elections, with loss of two of its prominent Lingayat leaders from North Karnataka.

Not only has the exit jolted the party, but also the narrative of Brahmin dominance over Lingayats is gaining traction in the community.

If former Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi joined Congress on Friday, the most important exit yet has been the former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, who is about to sever his decades long association, causing jitters in the party.

Reservation demand

While Mr. Savadi belongs to Ganiga Lingayat subsect, Mr. Shettar belongs to the political powerful Banajiga Lingayat subsect. The ruling BJP also did not get its act right in handling the reservation demand of Panchamasalis, another powerful Lingayat sub-sect.

This comes in the backdrop of Congress, which was believed to have alienated the community in 2018 over its support to separate Lingayat religion demand, aggressively wooing the community.

"Ahead of elections, the BJP has not got its optics right among its most important voter base. Already, the ignominious exit of former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa was weighing heavy on the party, which is also facing anti incumbency. It was forced to bring the veteran Lingayat strongman back to the forefront to appease the community," a source said.

As a result, the BJP, which returned with strong performance in Bombay Karnataka region is now under pressure, especially vulnerable in its existing seats in Belagavi, Hubballi-Dharwad, Bagalkot, Vijayapura and Haveri districts.

For the political optics, BJP sources say, the party has left out two former Lingayat chief ministers (including Mr. Yediyurappa) and one former deputy chief minister from electoral battle.

"Now, among the top rung Lingayat leadership in BJP, only Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, representing the Sadar Lingayat sub sect, is in the fray. The optics of these exits doesn't augur well for the party," lamented a senior leader of the party.

Brahmins vs. Lingayats

These exits and the sidelining of Mr. Yediyurappa is shrouded by a buzz that B. L. Santhosh, General Secretary (Organisation), BJP and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, both Brahmins, are trying to dominate the party and are behind the Lingayat leaders being sidelined.

Janata Dal (Secular) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy recently said that there was a conspiracy afoot in BJP to impose a Brahmin as Chief Minister, which has hit a raw nerve in the already jittery Veerashaiva-Lingayat community. Party leaders now fear being branded a "Brahmin party" which they have fought hard to shrug off.

Drawing comparison

Fishing in the troubled waters of BJP, senior Congress leader M.B. Patil, who led the separate Lingayat religion movement in 2018, tweeted on Sunday seeking to draw a comparison as to how S. Suresh Kumar, a Brahmin was given the ticket and Mr. Shettar, a Lingayat, denied the ticket, despite both being 67 years old.

He further tweeted: "Lingayats are not treated as the core of BJP, but merely a vote bank. Karnataka will witness a new massive political churn because of how Lingayats were mistreated by the BJP & specifically 'Two Vested Common Interests'. Lingayats are set to return home to the Congress in 2023".

On Sunday, in a clear attempt at damage control, BJP fielded Lingayat strongman Mr. Yediyurappa to attack Mr. Shettar and Mr. Savadi, who sought to reassure the community that the party will stand by the community and he resigned out of his own will and was not forced to do so.

EC analysing bulk transfers of small amounts to check digital corruption

Personnel from the State Account Service have been appointed in each district to analyse suspicious transactions and alert enforcement agencies to take action against corrupt players

INTERVIEW

Manoj Kumar Meena

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

Chief Electrol Officer of Karnataka Manoj Kumar Meena. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

Karnataka Votes 2023

With the upcoming Karnataka Assembly election gaining notoriety for being powered by big money, often by digital means, the Election Commission is monitoring the distribution of money through wallets and online payment platforms. While seizures of cash, liquor, precious metals and drugs have crossed ₹150 crore so far (after the election announcement on March 29), the monitoring of online transactions has been a challenge for the Commission.

In an exclusive interview with *The Hindu*, Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Manoj Kumar Meena said that the Commission is collecting data on the bulk transfer of small amounts from bank accounts, and analysing it.

Monitoring by banks

"Ten days ago, we had a meeting with representatives from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), all online payment platforms and money wallets, apart from the State-level bankers committee. As all these platforms are linked to banks, we have instructed all banks to keep a watch in their own way and through their own systems," he said. He added that personnel from the State Account Service have been appointed in each district to analyse suspicious transactions. "If they notice any such transaction, systems have been put in place to generate feeds and inform the enforcement agency for further action. As of now, there is no case, but we are keeping a strict vigil," he asserted.

Besides, any transaction of more than ₹1 lakh in banks is being scrutinised. "We are also working on monitoring the online e-commerce delivery platforms. Using artificial intelligence, the movement of goods which can be seen from e-way bills and from excess consumption in the State beyond the average consumption, are also being used as alerts," he said.

Village intelligence

To check electoral malprcatices, all Deputy Commissioners (DCs) have been told to take people into confidence at the village level and gather information. "Sometimes, there can be misleading information. If the local people are confident that a particular DC is impartial and that they can share information with him, our vigilance can be made even more effective. It all depends on the leadership qualities of the DC," he said.

Stating that vigilance is not limited to setting up checkposts and flying squads, the CEO said: "We are trying our best to hold free, fair and inducement-free polls."

Tackling urban apathy

Acknowledging that urban apathy is another huge challenge that the Commission faces in every election, the CEO said, "We have identified 77 constituencies where the polling percentage is lower than the State average. Further, we have shortlisted polling booths in each of these 77 constituencies where the polling percentage has been lower than the constituency's average. Our staff are interacting with residents in the jurisdiction of such polling booths to understand the issues that are keeping them away from voting. The issues raised are being addressed and people are motivated to come out and vote," he said.

The Commission is also providing better facilities at polling stations including parking facilities. "This time, we are also working on informing people about the queue in a polling station at any given time through the Chunavana mobile application. One person in the polling station will keep updating the queue [that is, the number of people waiting at the polling station] once every 15 minutes, which will give people an idea of their wait time," he said.

"Moreover, with elections happening mid-week this time, there is no excuse for people to stay away from voting," Mr. Meena added.

Kannur native killed during Sudan clashes

The Hindu Bureau
KANNUR

A native of Kannur, Albert Augustine (48), an ex-serviceman, was killed in a firing in Sudan on Saturday when clashes broke out between the Army and paramilitary forces.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, his father Augustine Alavelil said Albert had gone to Sudan for work and was with his family when the incident occurred.

He said the Indian embassy was trying to move the body from the region.

FULL REPORT ON CLASH
» PAGE 11

Fire in Dubai kills 16

The Hindu Bureau
DUBAI/MALAPPURAM

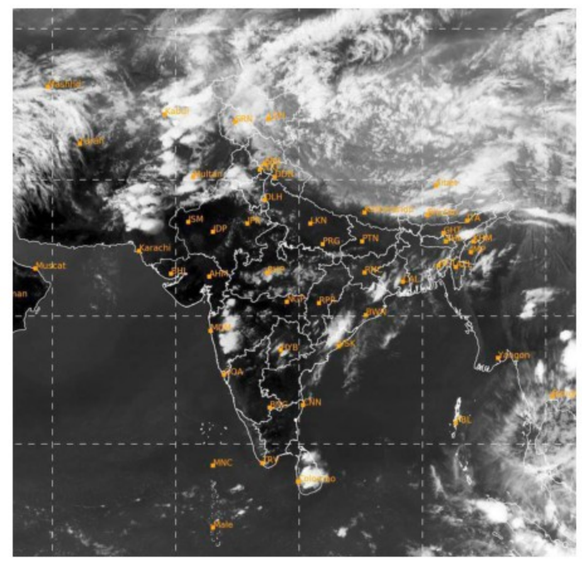
Four Indians, including a couple from Cherur near Vengara in Malappuram district, were among 16 people killed in an apartment fire at Al-Ras in Dubai on Saturday. Officials said on Sunday that nine others were injured in the blaze.

The Indian victims were identified as Rijesh Kalangadan, 38, his wife Jeshi Kandamangalath, 32, Gudu Saliyakoondu, 49, and Imam Kasim Abdul Khader, 43. The fire broke out on the fourth floor of the five-storey apartment building in the Al-Ras area. Rijesh and Jeshi died in their apartment reportedly after inhaling smoke.

(With inputs from PTI)

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Thunderstorm with lightning & gusty wind likely at isolated places over Rajasthan and with lightning at isolated places over Odisha, Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe. Heat Wave conditions likely in some parts over West Bengal and in isolated pockets over Bihar, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	38.9	25.7	Kozhikode	—	37.0	28.3
Ahmedabad	—	40.0	25.1	Kurnool	—	41.8	26.5
Aizawl	—	—	18.6	Lucknow	—	40.6	24.0
Allahabad	—	44.2	26.6	Madurai	—	39.2	24.4
Bengaluru	—	35.1	19.7	Mangaluru	—	35.2	27.2
Bhopal	—	37.8	23.5	Mumbai	—	33.0	25.5
Bhubaneswar	—	41.2	27.5	Mysuru	—	36.0	24.4
Chandigarh	—	39.0	21.1	New Delhi	—	40.0	20.8
Chennai	—	35.7	26.8	Patna	—	41.6	25.2
Coimbatore	—	37.7	24.4	Port Blair	—	34.2	25.7
Dehradun	—	37.0	18.5	Puducherry	—	35.7	26.2
Gangtok	—	24.9	16.4	Pune	—	38.1	20.1
Goa	—	34.6	26.0	Raipur	—	41.2	25.5
Guwahati	—	37.6	22.6	Ranchi	—	36.4	24.8
Hubballi	—	37.0	22.0	Shillong	—	26.9	16.1
Hyderabad	—	36.4	24.6	Shimla	—	24.5	15.5
Imphal	—	33.3	16.2	Srinagar	—	19.4	10.9
Jaipur	—	38.6	25.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.0	26.5
Kochi	—	33.2	27.6	Tiruchi	—	38.7	24.6
Kohima	—	26.4	15.5	Vijayawada	—	41.2	27.0
Kolkata	—	39.2	29.6	Visakhapatnam	—	34.5	29.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.43	..68	28	... 160	...216	
Bengaluru	.04	..—	12	... 127	...156	
Chennai	.03	..82	89	 94	86	
Delhi	.44	160	86	... 256	...326	
Hyderabad	.07	..28	35	... 110	...122	
Kolkata	.07	..—	27	... 136	...131	
Lucknow	.12	..93	29	... 321	...221	
Mumbai	.16	..39	88	... 199	...154	
Pune	.22	..36	42	... 309	...201	
Visakhapatnam	.13	..46	32	... 187	...165	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Meghalaya recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 389 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Damoh, Madhya Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 26

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

CBI arrests A.P. CM's uncle in former MP's murder case

The Hindu Bureau
KADAPA

Y.S. Bhaskar Reddy, father of Kadapa MP Y.S. Avinash Reddy and uncle of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, was arrested from his house in Pulivendula town on Sunday by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials, in connection with the murder of former MP Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy.

The police produced Mr. Bhaskar Reddy before the Special Judge and the judge ordered his remand for 14 days. Reacting to the arrest, Mr. Avinash Reddy declared that he would fight to any extent to prove his father's innocence.

"Our righteousness will definitely stand. We have complete faith and respect on the judiciary...We will fight and come out as innocent people," said Mr. Avinash Reddy.

The development comes close on the heels of the arrest of Gajjela Uday Kumar Reddy, a close follower of Mr. Avinash Reddy and a prime suspect in the case.

(With PTI inputs)

Consumed by flames

A couple and their five-year-old son were killed in a fire accident in the early hours of Sunday at a timber depot at Kushaiguda in Hyderabad. Officials said a short circuit may have triggered the fire. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Proposal for Sabarimala greenfield airport receives Central approval

The Hindu Bureau
KOTTAYAM

The plan to establish the Sabarimala greenfield airport at Erumely has received a major boost with the project proposal receiving approval from the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation. According to sources, the approval was granted after reviewing the techno-economic feasibility study report presented by the Kerala government.

V. Thulasidas, the special officer for the Sabarimala airport project, has confirmed the progress.

"The project has passed a significant technical milestone. At present, the social impact assessment (SIA) study for the project is in its final stage, while the environment impact assessment (EIA) is nearing completion," he said.

The Cheruvally estate where the Kerala government has proposed to establish the Sabarimala greenfield airport. FILE PHOTO

According to him, the proposed airport will have a 3.5-km-long runway with adequate width to enable the operation of aircraft of all sizes.

Upon completing land acquisition, the detailed project report will be formulated, followed by the constitution of a Special Purpose Vehicle to execute the project.

"Assuming that all the requisite approvals are received, it will take another three to four years to construct the airport," he added.

Lawyers criticise move to provide free legal aid for Kerala train arson accused

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The left-leaning All India Lawyers Union urged the legal services authority to review the decision

A section of Kerala lawyers has opposed free legal aid extended to Shahrukh Saifi, the accused in the Kozhikode train arson case.

P. Peethambaran, the Chief Legal Defence Counsel engaged by the Kerala State Legal Services Authority (KELSA), had moved the bail application for the accused in court.

Opposing the engagement of the defence counsel for Mr. Saifi, the left-leaning All India Lawyers Union urged the authority to review the decision. The decision to engage counsel for an accused in a heinous crime even before the police completed the primary stages of the investigation was shocking.

The authority should have decided whether the accused was eligible for free legal aid, said C. P. Pramod, the State secretary of the Union.

However, Mr. Peethambaran, said he would continue to defend Mr. Saifi.

K.T. Nisar Ahammed, the member secretary of KELSA, said any person in police custody had the legal right to avail himself or herself of the service of a lawyer. If the accused was unable to engage a lawyer, the authority had the legal and Constitutional obligation to provide free legal aid, he said.

Legal aid was offered to Mr. Saifi after the police informed the authority that he was not represented by a lawyer. He would continue to get the support of the defence counsel till he engaged a private lawyer, he said.

Mr. Ahammed said the authority would continue to provide all the needy persons, irrespective of the nature of the crime alleged to have been committed by them, free legal aid.

TERROR ANGLE IN CASE
» PAGE 8

JNTBGRI honoured with GGI-Gardens award for this year

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI) here has won the 2023 Global Genome Initiative for Gardens Award. This is the second time that the institute has been honoured with the award. This year, the institute is one of the 10 botanical gardens and arboreta across the globe to win it.

The institute had picked several plants including the medicinal plants *Coscinium fenestratum* (tree turmeric) and *Piper barberi* (in Malayalam, 'Kaatu Mulaku') for genome diversity conservation under the GGI-Gardens programme.

Coscinium fenestratum was selected by JNTBGRI for genome diversity conservation

The JNTBGRI holds the largest living collection of plant species in India with over 50,000 accessions of about 4,800 species. The institute had discovered more than 800 new species of angiosperms, mushrooms and fungi, it said in a statement.

Above 41 degrees Celsius recorded in parts of A.P.

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Seventeen mandals experienced severe heatwave conditions and 100 others experienced heatwave conditions in various districts of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday.

The maximum temperatures crossed 41 degrees Celsius at many places in the coastal and Rayalaseema districts.

According to the A.P. State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) report, 11 mandals in Anakapalli and three mandals each in Kakinada and Vizianagaram districts experienced severe heatwave conditions.

Many coastal mandals continued to experience heatwave conditions. As per the APSDMA forecast, no mandal in the State will witness severe heatwave conditions, but 116 mandals are likely to experience heatwave conditions on Monday.

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PERSONAL

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I, JOY Roshan Kannak Ayyappan Govind S/o Ayyappan Nair Kannak Govind R/o BA–1202, Birch A Wing, Salarpuria Greenage, Bommanahalli, Bengaluru, Karnataka–560068; have changed my name to Joy Roshan

I Sunitha Suryanarayan D/o Suryanarayan Venkatachalam Wife of Ratheesh Palakkad Ramachandran, residing at Aashirwad, 6/A, Premier Parrk Layout Gubbi Cross, Doddagubbi MN Road Byrathi, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560077, have changed the name of minor Son Ashutosh Ratheesh Iyer aged 6 years and he shall hereafter be known as Ashu Ratheesh Iyer for all purposes in future.

I, SHRIYAAN Panigrahi, M/O : Jyotshna Rani Panda,R/O Flat No C 2101, Mantriserenity,Kanakapura Road,Doddakallasandra,Blr–560062.Have Changed My Name As "Shriyaan Panda Madenur" Vide Afdvt Dtd 14/04/2023

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EDUCATIONAL

GENERAL

Murder of law, order

There must be an independent inquiry into the Atiq Ahmed case

In life and in death, former lawmaker Atiq Ahmed typified the collapse of the rule of law in Uttar Pradesh. The visuals of both him and his brother Khalid Azim being shot dead in cold blood, on Saturday, while they were handcuffed and in police custody, show the abject lawlessness that prevails in the State. Early in March, Ahmed had approached the Supreme Court of India expressing fear that he might be "killed in a fake encounter on one pretext or the other by the U.P. Police". The Court refused to entertain his plea. His son, Asad Ahmad, was killed in an alleged encounter with a U.P. police team on Thursday in Jhansi. Father and son were both accused in the sensational daylight murder of a political rival in February. Ahmed, the former leader of the Samajwadi Party and Apna Dal opened his history sheet at the age of 17 and had more than 100 criminal cases at the time of his murder at the age of 60. Far from facing the force of law, he reigned supreme as a don-cum-politician through various regimes in U.P. since the 1990s. Even when he went to jail, his empire of crime did not collapse. He was shifted to a prison in Gujarat in 2019, and on his return to U.P., was facing fresh charges of murder which ended with his own killing in the most chilling manner.

According to the U.P. police, 183 alleged criminals have been gunned down in encounters in the last six years. More than 10,900 police encounters have taken place since March 2017. Due process is central to any rule of law, and once that is allowed to be short-circuited, the result is chaos. The U.P. police and administration have stretched the limits of its legitimate power by the dubious and discriminatory application of law and processes. The demolition of properties of people suspected of crime or participating in political protest has become routine. It appears that this practice is popular among the supporters of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and that makes this trend not merely lawlessness but also a social pathology. Several political parties have sought accountability in the double murder that took place under the watch of the U.P. police. The State has announced a three-member commission headed by a former High Court judge to inquire into the lapses. Considering the serious charges that the State government and its police face of discrimination based on religion and caste, and scant regard for due process, an inquiry of a demonstrably independent nature is required.

Not a whistle-blower

The 2023 Pentagon leaks have fuelled insecurity between the U.S. and its allies

U.S. federal authorities have arrested Jack Teixeira, 21, a member of the Air National Guard, in the case of classified information of the Pentagon that was leaked on social media in recent months, which analysts say has exposed sensitive data regarding the war efforts in Ukraine, potentially undermining Kyiv's plans to push back the Russian invasion. The top-secret files that were first leaked on social media websites Discord and 4chan in March this year also caused a flutter for the Joe Biden administration when it revealed confidential and unflattering information about U.S. allies, including South Korea, Israel, and other nations of West Asia and Africa, and assessments of China's developing cyber-attack capabilities. Potentially most damaging, though, were the leaker's posts, which, reports said, genuinely contained classified information of the U.S. military, on Ukraine's air defences being compromised owing to a shortage of missiles in February. Also possibly undermining the tactical plans and the element of surprise for Ukrainian forces were files that spoke of the embattled country's long-planned spring counter offensive to beat back Russian forces starting on April 30 with 12 Ukrainian brigades. While no explicit propagandistic post of the leaker has been revealed yet, it is obvious that the dots join to paint a clear picture of Mr. Teixeira's intention to discredit the war effort of Ukraine and its western allies and show up the Biden administration in a bad light amongst its global partners.

One thing is clear: Mr. Teixeira is no whistleblower and, certainly, comparisons to Chelsea Manning or Edward Snowden would be misplaced. The latest leak of U.S. federal government information lacks the moral clarity and ethical underpinning of the WikiLeaks files and the NSA global surveillance exposé that Ms. Manning and Mr. Snowden respectively shared with the world in a bid to highlight the excesses of the U.S. government and spur conversations on human rights, foreign policy and privacy in the digital age. Whistle-blowing in the latter contexts led to introspection, policy dialogue and reforms to bring about greater transparency in U.S. government actions, within limits. The 2023 Pentagon leaks have, contrarily, achieved nothing of this sort but fuelled insecurity between the U.S. and other global powers, and potentially hobbled the war strategies of the Ukrainian armed forces in their bid to fight off Russian troops attacking their country. Mr. Teixeira has, appropriately, been charged for the leaks under the U.S. Espionage Act. The critical next step for the Biden White House is now to examine how and why he got top security clearance to handle classified information, and take steps to further secure and limit the distribution of sensitive information whose release could seriously undermine U.S. national security interests.

Diplomacy, with a change in terms of reference

Hamid Ansari

was the Vice President of India (2007-2017)

Mediation is rarely a spontaneous act; more often than not it is preceded by quiet efforts to seek a meeting point between differing viewpoints of individuals or organisations. It figures in Article 33 of the United Nations Charter among means of 'Pacific Settlement of Disputes'. but in legal terms is different from Good Offices and Arbitration.

A good instance of this was recently witnessed on the global stage. The question of motivation can be debated.

In a joint statement on March 10, 2023, by Iran, Saudi Arabia, and China (sitting at a table in the shape of an isosceles triangle), the three countries announced that an agreement has been reached between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran covering a resumption of diplomatic relations between them and a re-opening of their embassies and missions within a period not exceeding two months. The agreement affirmed their respect for the sovereignty of states, non-interference in the internal affairs of states and said the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of both countries shall meet to implement this, arrange for the return of their Ambassadors, and discuss means of enhancing bilateral relations.

Iranian National Security Adviser Ali Shamkhani (who is seen in the official photograph of the ceremony) is from the Office of the Supreme Leader in Iran and lends credibility to the accord.

A commentary in an Iranian newspaper on March 11 depicted the event as 'One agreement and seven achievements'; it listed the latter as Tehran's willingness to engage in dialogue; failure of U.S.'s effort to isolate Iran; strengthening of the alliance of Islamic Countries; failure of Israeli efforts against this agreement; failure of U.S. effort to show the Iranian public that it has no choice but to agree to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with America; Beijing's successful entry in West Asian relations, and failure of dreams of 'regime change'.

American and Israeli reactions

Later that month – and writing with a good deal of caution – a Chinese academic observed in the *Global Times* that 'China's diplomacy as a major power is just getting started' and may even result in some marked changes in the regional situation.

The Chinese-brokered agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran reflects a new sort of regional alignment amidst America's declining influence

U.S. reactions, apart from unconcealed surprise, reflected the change in terms of reference in international diplomacy. Equally surprised was Israel, the other major player in the region, which saw it as a fatal blow to the effort to build a regional coalition against Iran. One commentator said 'China brought Saudi Arabia together with Iran at a time when Israel had hoped that the United States would bring it together with Saudi Arabia'. Henry Kissinger told David Ignatius of *The Washington Post* that 'I see it as a substantial change in the strategic situation in the Middle East. The Saudis are now balancing their security by playing off the U.S. against China.'

Aaron Miller, who served for long as a State Department adviser on Middle East, said the development 'demonstrates that [the] U.S.'s influence and credibility in the region has [have] diminished and a new sort of international regional alignment is taking place which has empowered and given both Russia and China newfound influence and status'.

The background

The backdrop to the event is noteworthy. Bilateral efforts have been underway since early 2016 to ease tensions that had developed specifically between Tehran, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, and generally within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in relation to Yemen and Syria. The Emir of Kuwait and the Sultan of Oman initiated steps that were responded to by Iran. Talks were also held in Baghdad and during Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to China in February. All concerned were worried about the attacks on shipping and energy facilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates and the longer term implications of the regional conflicts that were underway. These together 'brought home the risks of being on the front line of confrontation'.

The official visit by China's President Xi Jinping to Saudi Arabia in December 2022, also saw him attending the first China-Arab States Summit and the China-GCC Summit. The theme of his address was 'Building on Past Achievements and Jointly Creating a Brighter Future of China-GCC Relations'. China and the GCC, he stressed, should be partners for common security: China will continue to firmly support GCC countries in safeguarding their security, and support the efforts by countries of the region to resolve differences through dialogue and consultations and to build a gulf security architecture. China, he said, 'welcomes the participation of GCC countries in the Global Security Initiative (GSI) in a joint effort to uphold regional peace and stability'.

The speech laid stress on five priority areas: 'energy cooperation'; 'finance and investment cooperation'; 'innovation, science and technology'; 'aerospace cooperation' and 'Chinese language and cultural cooperation'. An Action Plan for 2023-2027 was agreed upon. A comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement with specific agreements and some memoranda of understanding were also signed. It said the two supported 'each other's core interests'. The Chinese side 'commended the efforts made' by the Kingdom to serve Chinese Haj and Umrah pilgrims. The statement stressed the importance of deepening joint cooperation with regard to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and on attracting Chinese expertise in Saudi megaprojects. The two sides signed 'a harmonizing plan' between the KSA's Vision 2030 and the BRI. It is reported that a China-GCC summit in Beijing is being scheduled.

The Indian stand

India's reaction to this development has been restrained. Apart from historical linkages, the region is in India's proximate neighbourhood and within its security parameters. It is the principal source of hydrocarbon imports, and increasingly of investments. It is also an important destination for manpower exports apart from being a major trading partner including projects. The official policy has focused on bilateral relations and avoidance of involvement in bilateral and regional disputes. Given these priorities, India has consciously refrained from speculative ventures in alternate security architectures apart from supporting cooperative security and freedom of waterways and of navigation. The region should not be viewed in competition with China without the latter's economic and military capacity nor should India consider itself a surrogate for those who have been outplayed, at least for the moment, in power games for transitory affections.

The past cannot be undone through a rechristening

Ziya Us Salam

We are living in the Dark Age of Islamophobia. Full stop. Naked, ugly, disconcerting. A sad testimony to the moral squalor of our times. Events across the world compelled the United Nations, in 2022, to declare March 15 as International Day to Combat Islamophobia, to take "concrete action in the face of rising hatred, discrimination, and violence against Muslims".

The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, affirmed that the move is "a call for action to stamp out anti-Muslim hatred". India, with arguably the second largest Muslim population, opposed the move, saying "It is important that the United Nations remains above such religious matters which may seek to divide us rather than bring us together on one platform of peace and harmony and treat the World as One Family". In reality, India, more than many countries, is in the throes of Islamophobia.

It is not about a spate of lynchings anymore, from Dadri in 2015 to Delhi in 2023. Or the frequent attacks on mosques and even *dargahs*, hitherto considered the common place of worship for people across religions. Or even *hijab* politics, where pro- and anti-*hijab* groups are vociferously ranged against one another. It manifests itself most clearly in this urgent, almost desperate, bid to rename places built by Sultanate and Mughal rulers.

While some towns may have a direct relation to the name of the king or Sultan, in many cases the names of cities are either being changed or there is a demand that they be changed, solely because they are in Urdu. This is ironic, considering that Urdu was born in India. And till not long ago, it was not considered the language of adherents of a particular faith. A case in point is Faizabad which was built by Nawab Saadat Ali Khan in the 18th Century. It was located on a busy trade route, connecting east and central Awadh. Here, business flourished and people made a lot of profit – hence the word faiz or successful or victorious. Or, take the demand to rename Aligarh as Harigarh. Aligarh was so named after the Marathas, and not the Mughals, took over the fort here (called Sabitgarh and Muhammadgarh at various times) and renamed it after their governor, Najaf Ali Khan. It had even been called Kol. Never was it identified as Harigarh, a demand increasingly being made.

Attempts to do away with certain aspects of history – erasing the Muslim links of some Indian cities – have the potential to damage the fabric of a multi-religious India

For hundreds of years, there was no issue with Allahabad or Aurangabad. Or Aligarh and Osmanabad. Or even Mughal Sarai. The common citizen still does not have a problem. Go to Allahabad which was renamed Prayagraj by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath a few years ago; people still refer to their city as Allahabad, except that the powers that be see everything through tinted glasses. It is immaterial that a city may have been built by a Sultan who saved the country from repeated assaults by the Mongols, or that a monument may have been built by a Mughal emperor who was born in undivided India, in Sindh or Gujarat, ruled from Agra or Delhi, and never set foot abroad (not even to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca). Just the name is sufficient to rouse the right-wing brigade.

The cases of Mughalsarai and Aurangabad

In 2018, Mughalsarai was in focus. It was renamed not after the former Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was born there, but after the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh ideologue Deendayal Upadhyaya who died there under mysterious circumstances, in 1968. The railway station was also painted in saffron shade, making it clear that the government was using the past to settle scores with the present, much like what had happened in Allahabad. The government forgot that the city Mughal emperor Akbar had founded was *Ila Vas* or *Ila Bas* or abode of god, and located adjacent to Prayag. The word Ila became Allah later during the British time – niceties lost on those driven by bigotry.

This year too the story played out again – in the keen desire to rename Aurangabad. Now, Aurangzeb, who lies buried in Aurangabad, has been a red rag for Hindutva practitioners, and many criticise him, with justification, for demolishing temples. But there are historians like Catherine B. Asher and Audrey Truschke who point out that the demolitions were almost always a political act, and there were plenty of occasions when the emperor issued *firmans* granting the safety and well being of Brahmins, even granting them land.

A government that is in a tearing hurry to erase any Muslim association with the city, promptly named it after Sambhaji, the eldest son of Shivaji who was at one time a Mughal *mansabdar* and later involved in a combat with fellow Maratha Rajaram to ascend the throne following Shivaji's death in 1680. Sambhaji was captured by the Mughals and executed in 1689 on Aurangzeb's order. The Aurangabad renaming (to Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar) is a peculiar instance where the name of the victor has been replaced with that of the loser.

Hate and exclusion

All these attempts to tear up the pages of history books come with the potential to tear apart the warp and woof of Indian society.

Muslims in India may have treated the Mughals and Sultans with the same indifference or irreverence they reserved for, say the Mauryas, the Guptas or the Cholas. The oft-repeated expression those days was 'History is boring!" Now, it seems it is divisive. Today, they are often forced into an uncomfortable situation of having to take a position. As a Muslim, and sane citizen of this country, you may or may not endorse much of what the Sultanate or Mughal rulers did. But now they are being forced to resist a majoritarian triumphalism that is bent upon erasing every speck of Islamic influence. Clearly, the right-wing proponents are guilty of a craven subjugation to the politics of hate and exclusion. Islamophobia, anyone?

As a multi-religious society, it is important to remember that the past cannot be undone through a rechristening. It is wise to stay in the moment, appreciate who we are, and what we have achieved. Retribution does not pave the way to redemption.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pulwama and allegations

Former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik's allegations directed at the Prime Minister, the former Home Minister and the National Security Adviser in the matter regarding the Pulwama attack, where 40 paramilitary personnel lost their lives, are far too serious an issue to be swept under the carpet (Page 1, "Opposition targets Modi over Satya Pal Malik's claims on Pulwama attack", April 16). It can be safely presumed that the government's response would never be forthcoming and the otherwise eloquent top leader can be expected to maintain a strict silence. The charge that the tragedy was milked to gain benefit in the elections shows the ruling party in a bad light.

C.V. Aravind,
Bengaluru

More than enough information is available in the public domain about the real and imaginary lapses of the leaders of the Opposition parties, so the people of the country can draw their own conclusions about the health of the Opposition. In contrast, the ruling party has been able to successfully maintain an aura of invincibility by 'sophisticated throttling' of the information flow, especially from 'insiders', since 2014. In this context, the allegations by Mr. Malik try to shed some light on the 'working style' of the people who matter in governance. One cannot draw far-reaching conclusions from Mr. Malik's allegations, but, at the same time, one cannot discard the reality from emerging.

It remains to be seen how well the Opposition is going to convince the common man following these 'disclosures', without much support from the traditional visual media.

A. Venkatasubramanian,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

Prayagraj shooting

The killing of criminal-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed and his brother by 'assailants' while in the custody of the Uttar Pradesh police raises disturbing questions about the law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh. It is astounding that such killings are hailed by large sections of the media and the general public. The incident serves as a grim reminder to governments in India not to run their own versions of the law through encounter killings and staged shoot-outs.

J. Anantha Padmanabhan,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

Hardcore criminals, undoubtedly, merit deterrent action according to the law. However, if the agenda of the police is to somehow get rid of them, it only shows the inept handling of the problem. It is a mystery how none of the police personnel was hurt when the perpetrators were pumping a volley of bullets into the victims. The U.P. government should uphold the rule of law, precluding the use of extra-constitutional methods

V. Johan Dhanakumar,
Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

The dynast who has become a political gadfly

Captain G.R. Gopinath

is a soldier, farmer and founder of Air Deccan

Rahul Gandhi has inherited the mantle of a dynast. He is trying to shake off that image and be a democrat. He is also unsuccessfully trying to erase the label of a dilettante, of an easy-going 'prince' with privileges and entitlement – a portrait effectively painted of him by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Mr. Gandhi sees himself a young rebel. Some would say he is a rebel without a cause. It is difficult to make out what Mr. Gandhi precisely stands for. It is not enough to be anti-Modi; he has to come up with his own clear vision for India – on the economy, employment, charges of appeasement of minorities and vote bank politics of his party. He has to counter the impression created by the BJP that he is anti-Hindu, and clarify his stand on these and other issues. He is attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his alleged proximity to crony capitalists and, in particular, of favouring the Adani group, but those accusations do not totally turn the tide in his favour as the Congress was as guilty of the same scandals when it was in power. Only the names of the tycoons were different during the United Progressive Alliance era. The people know that most politicians are in bed with big business. The BJP is only more brazen.

Fighting perception

Mr. Gandhi is no longer young, but he is strong and agile. He sprinted under the scorching sun during the Bharat Jodo Yatra and outran youngsters. He wants to resonate with young India. But he has a problem. He is still perceived as a dynast. Perhaps he is. He still calls the shots in the party without any authority. The recent election to the post of Congress president came across as a sham as Mallikarjun Kharge, the genial octogenarian, is considered by many as a Gandhi appointee. Mr. Gandhi is caught between the young brigade and the entrenched, fawning old guard. All this is coming in the way of not only keeping his party strong and cohesive, but also in inspiring the Opposition to band together and be a credible challenge to the BJP.

Mr. Gandhi's interactions with members of the British Parliament, journalists and foreign universities in the U.K. showed him as a decent man with knowledge and maturity. He is no 'Pappu,' as made out by his opponents. He attracts crowds and media attention as he and his family name have charisma. Yet, he is seen as indecisive and weak unlike Mr. Modi. His equivocation on many issues seem to be in contrast to the shrewd mercilessness and purposive actions of not just Mr. Modi, but of his own grandmother Indira Gandhi. He often comes across as a perennial Prince Hamlet, forever tormented by doubts. Look at the ham-handed way in which he handled the internal party strife in Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan. His ill-advised actions and prevarication destabilised Congress State governments and the party lost two States that were in power. Rajasthan is tottering as the war between Ashok Gehlot and Sachil Pilot continues.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra was a brilliant idea to galvanise the flagging morale of the Congress. Rahul's indefatigable energy, infectious enthusiasm and the theme of knitting together the country by rising above differences of caste and creed attracted crowds. Meanwhile, two important State elections were conducted. He should have taken short breaks from the yatra and campaigned for his party, but he faltered. He said his yatra was not political and skipped the two States. He would have improved his party's score in Gujarat and probably won Himachal Pradesh where the Congress had a good standing and people were disenchanted with the incumbent BJP. Of what use is a political leader who is not obsessed with winning to the point of madness? Despite losses in those two States, Mr. Gandhi's stature rose after he completed the yatra. His perseverance, endearing ways, bonding with the common folk, and recurring theme that love will always triumph over hatred gave hope that communal harmony will return. He was seen to be maturing as a serious politician.

But soon after, Mr. Gandhi was convicted in a defamation case filed in 2019 for recklessly asking why all "thieves" have the surname Modi. He was given an opportunity to apologise. If he had done that, the matter could have ended there and would have shown him in good light. But Mr. Gandhi refused. When asked why he did not apologise, he said he was a Gandhi and not a Savarkar to apologise. He again displayed indiscretion. All this showed Mr. Gandhi as lacking in good judgment. The BJP top leadership have done worse: they have spewed venom against religious minorities, instigated violence, and insulted the Gandhi family. But to sustain the goodwill generated during the yatra, Mr. Gandhi will need to do better.

A united Opposition

Mr. Gandhi must resolve to win elections not only for the Congress, but cast aside his ego and build alliances so that the Opposition can fight the elections as a united front. He must assess his party's strengths and weaknesses in various States and take a back seat where regional parties are better positioned to outperform the BJP. Mr. Gandhi must declare that he will be open to the idea of someone else becoming the Prime Minister. This may be the biggest challenge for him and the Opposition. The regional leaders are as authoritarian as Mr. Modi who they accuse of being an autocrat. They have overblown egos and are temperamental with disparate ideologies. If Mr. Gandhi can bind the Opposition to form the next government, no one will care that he is a dynast. Nothing succeeds like success.

It is not enough to be anti-Modi; Rahul Gandhi has to come up with his own clear vision for India

Dealing with dissidence in a poll year

The BRS is dealing firmly with disgruntled leaders, but has other challenges ahead

STATE OF PLAY

B. Chandrashekhar
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With the Telangana Assembly elections scheduled for December, two of the three major political parties - the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and the Congress - appear to be toughening their stand on dissident activities. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) seems to have no problems on this count; it is welcoming all the dissidents from the BRS and the Congress into its fold, hoping that they will bolster its standing in the State. The BJP claims that many leaders from the Congress and the BRS want to join the national party, which indicates its growing strength in the State.

Last week, the BRS leadership decided to suspend former Minister Jupally Krishna Rao and former MP Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy from the party on the charge that they were initiating anti-party activities. Some people consider this a belated move as these two leaders have repeatedly launched tirades against the party. They believe that the BRS has to put its foot down at least during the election year as grievances aired in public could affect the party's electoral prospects.

In 2013, Mr. Krishna Rao joined the BRS, which was then called the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, after quitting as Minister in the Congress government in united Andhra Pradesh. Mr. Srinivasa Reddy quit the YSR Congress Party and joined the BRS in 2016. Both the leaders played little or no role in the movement for statehood for Telangana, but were nevertheless admitted into the party. BRS leader and

Minister for Agriculture S. Niranjan Reddy argued that even vocal opponents of the TRS were admitted into the party then to strengthen its position in some areas following the formation of Telangana. He said the party's interests were the most important.

But the leadership realises now that disgruntled leaders could cause damage to public perception of the party. "All this while, the party leadership has been patient. It has tried to assuage the grievances of the two leaders. They were asked to wait for opportunities even though they tried to sabotage the party's prospects in the rural and urban local body elections and have been vocal against the leadership," said a senior party leader, justifying the suspensions.

The problem is not just limited to Mr. Krishna Rao and Mr. Srinivasa Reddy. BRS leaders said the problem of dissidence persists in over two dozen constituencies, particularly in 14 constituencies where sitting MLAs got elected on Congress (12) and Telugu Desam Party (2) tickets and later defected to the BRS. While there has been constant bickering in some constituencies since the 2018 elections, efforts were made to solve them by giving nominated posts to some leaders and making some others MLCs. For instance, recently, Gellu Srinivas Yadav, the student wing president of the BRS, who contested against Eatala Rajender in Huzurabad in the 2021 byelection, was made a Corporation Chairman. The appointment was made since he was reportedly disappointed after Padi Kaushik Reddy was announced as the candidate for Huzurabad for the coming elections. The party also suffers the problem of groupism in some constituencies with certain groups being unable to adjust with the unilateral attitude of the MLAs.

There are rumblings within the Congress too. A former Nirmal MLA, A. Maheshwar Reddy, joined the BJP recently after complaining that a Congress leader was trying to oust senior leaders from the party.

The BJP leadership is hopeful that there will be more such migrations from the Congress as well as the BRS in the coming months. While the BJP and even the Congress have said that the recent developments indicate cracks in the BRS fort, which are bound to widen as elections come closer, the BRS has shot back saying the two parties need to look at their own backyards as they face similar or bigger problems in many constituencies.

The BRS has sent out a strong message by suspending the two leaders. But it will be a challenge for the party to hold its flock together, especially in constituencies where its long-standing supporters are upset that leaders who were formerly with the Congress and the TDP were given ticket to contest and won elections. A possible tie-up with the Left parties could also bring headache for the BRS as the CPI and CPI (M) are eyeing seats in combined Khammam and Nalgonda districts, where the BRS is strong. With elections six months away, the ruling party has little time for damage control.

BJP had the edge in recent bipolar contests in Karnataka

Elections in Karnataka have increasingly become bipolar, with 77% of the seats recording bipolar contests in 2018

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan

In the 2018 Karnataka Assembly elections, 77% of the seats witnessed bipolar contests, which meant that only two parties were effectively fighting the election in those constituencies. This marked a shift from the 2013 and 2008 elections when less than 50% of the seats witnessed a bipolar contest. Moreover, multi-cornered fights involving more than three parties have become a rarity.

Table 1 shows the percentage share of seats which witnessed uncompetitive (less than two effective parties), bipolar (two), triangular (three) and fragmented (more than three) contests in 2008, 2013 and 2018. The share of bipolar seats increased from 46% to 77%, while the share of triangular seats reduced from 43% to 17% between 2008 and 2018. The share of fragmented seats peaked at 19% in 2013, but reduced to just 4% in the 2018 polls.

Although the total number of parties competing for a seat is determined by the nominations submitted, the "effective number of parties" within a constituency is based on the votes they obtain. Utilising the Laakso and Taagepera method to examine the distribution of vote shares among parties within a constituency allows us to ascertain the actual number of parties which are effectively competing for that specific seat. This approach considers both the number of parties participating and their respective vote shares to calculate the effective parties involved. This video clarifies the method: https://bit.ly/41vScZZ

This sharp turn towards bipolar contests from triangular and multi-party contests was recorded across all regions though the degree of change varied. **Table 2** shows the percentage share of seats which witnessed uncompetitive, bipolar, triangular and fragmented contests in 2008, 2013 and 2018 across the six regions of the State. The map can be used as a geographical reference for the six regions – Bengaluru, Central, Coastal, Kalyana (Hyderabad Karnataka), Kittur (Mumbai Karnataka), and Southern.

In every region more than 70% of the seats recorded bipolar contests in 2018, as seen in the table. In the Central, Hyderabad and Southern regions of the State, a majority of the seats recorded tripolar contests in 2008 and gradually shifted towards bipolar contests in 2013. Bipolar contests peaked in 2018. In the other three regions, while a majority of the seats had witnessed bipolar contests even in 2008 and 2013, the share of such constituencies surged in 2018.

Table 3A lists the BJP's strike rate (wins/seats contested) in bipolar and triangular contests in the last three elections. **Table 3B** does the same for the Congress and **Table 3C** for the JD(S). For instance, the strike rate was 49% for the BJP and 35% for the Congress in 2018 in bipolar contests.

Tables 3A and 3B show a general trend. The Congress's strike rate is weaker in bipolar seats and stronger in triangular contests. Even in 2013, when it formed the government, this was the case, though the gap was narrow. The BJP's strike rate is stronger in bipolar seats and weaker in triangular contests, except in 2013 when it lost. This shows that the BJP has an edge in bipolar contests. Karnataka elections have increasingly recorded bipolar fights in the majority of the seats.

This trend is not unique to Karnataka, which is going to the polls in May. An analysis of Uttar Pradesh's recent elections show that the share of seats recording bipolar contests rose from 8% in 2012 to 71% in 2022. There, too, the BJP had an edge in bipolar seats with a strike rate of 71% in 2022, while the Samajwadi Party had a strike rate of just 27% in bipolar seats.

Polar opposites

The tables are based on data collated from Lok Dhaba, a repository of Indian election results and a project of the Trivedi Center for Political Data (TCPD). TCPD is a a research centre led by faculty members from the Political Science and Computer Science Departments at Ashoka University. The regional classifications are supplied by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies

Congress supporters walk past giant cut-outs of senior party leaders in Kolar on Sunday. The Congress party has been relatively strong in triangular contests in the past. PTI

Table 1 | The % share of seats which witnessed uncompetitive (less than two effective parties), bipolar (two), triangular (three) and fragmented (more than three) contests

Type of fight	2008	2013	2018
Uncompetitive	1%	1%	**2%**
Bipolar	46%	49%	**77%**
Triangular	43%	29%	**17%**
Fragmented	11%	19%	**4%**

Map | The map distinguishes the six regions of Karnataka

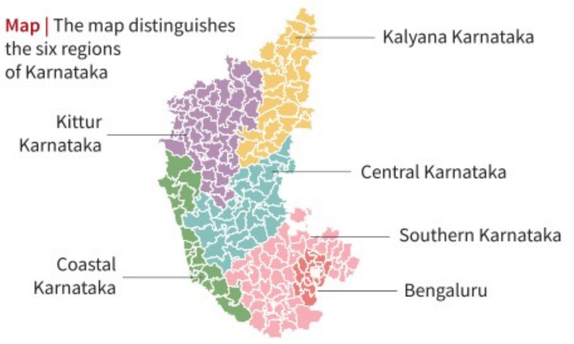

Table 2 | The % of seats which witnessed uncompetitive (<2), bipolar (2), triangular (3) and fragmented (>3) contests

	Bengaluru			Central Karnataka			Coastal Karnataka			Kalyana Karnataka			Kittur Karnataka			Southern Karnataka		
	2008	2013	2018	2008	2013	2018	2008	2013	2018	2008	2013	2018	2008	2013	2018	2008	2013	2018
<2	–	–	**9%**	6%	–	–	–	5%	**5%**	–	–	–	–	4%	–	–	–	**2%**
2	69%	69%	**82%**	34%	46%	**71%**	62%	76%	**81%**	32%	32%	**77%**	46%	40%	**82%**	37%	51%	**71%**
3	31%	19%	**9%**	54%	40%	**20%**	33%	10%	**10%**	61%	35%	**19%**	38%	26%	**12%**	41%	37%	**25%**
>3	0%	11%	**0%**	6%	14%	**9%**	5%	10%	**5%**	6%	32%	**3%**	16%	30%	**6%**	22%	12%	**2%**

Table 3 | Tables list BJP's, Congress' and JD(S)'s strike rate (wins/seats contested) in bipolar and triangular contests

3A: BJP

Year	Bipolar	Triangular
2008	55%	45%
2013	14%	20%
2018	**49%**	**38%**

3B: INC

Year	Bipolar	Triangular
2008	31%	41%
2013	54%	56%
2018	**35%**	**38%**

3C: JD (S)

Year	Bipolar	Triangular
2008	13%	14%
2013	20%	17%
2018	**18%**	**22%**

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FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 17, 1973

No U.S. submarine to Pakistan

Calcutta, April 16: The U.S. Ambassador to India, Mr. Daniel P. Moynihan, to-day dismissed as "a groundless rumour" press reports that the U.S. proposed to supply a submarine to Pakistan to replace "ghazi" which has sunk during the 1971 war. Mr. Moynihan told newsmen at the airport here: "We read the report in newspapers. We got a reply from the U.S. Government this week. I have to say that the report is not true. It is a groundless rumour. I do not know from where the report came." Mr. Moynihan indicated a clear U.S. stand on the sub-continent to emerge during the coming talks of U.S. Deputy Secretary Mr. Kennett Rush and the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Joseph Sisco with the Government of India during their visit to Delhi this week. Asked about the U.S. attitude on the problems of the Indian sub-continent, he said: "We are looking forward to very good meetings and talks of Mr. Rush and Mr. Sisco with the Government of India on Friday and Saturday." "I hope the talks will be very warm. I think nothing can be more clear about our stand. I think I should not say anything more before the talks," he added. Mr. Moynihan said he was "hopeful of growth of trade between India and the USA now." Asked whether the U.S. Government was taking any initiative to increase the volume of trade with India, he said this was a matter for individual traders to work out.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 17, 1923

Postal theft

Calcutta, April 16: The postal authorities have set the law in motion in connection with the mysterious disappearance of a Chittagong mail bag containing Government currency notes and other documents valued at about a lakh of rupees and its substitution by a spurious bag containing waste papers. The fraud was detected at the parcel department, Calcutta General Post Office, and enquiries are being made to find out where the substitution was effected. This is the second disappearance of valuable articles from the postal mail bag within a few months in the General Post Office. In the first case about Rs. 60,000 was stolen, the money was recovered and an assistant in the Postal Department of the General Post Office McDonald is awaiting trial at the High Court Sessions.

From Page One

Judicial panel to probe killing of Atiq, brother

According to Lavlesh's Facebook profile, he was a district leader of the Bajrang Dal, while his family alleged that he was a drug addict, and had been deeply religious. While the three accused initially claimed they had committed the murders to gain prominence among criminals, the police are questioning them on their motives, seeking to find out whether they had been hired and given firearms to carry out the killings.

On Sunday afternoon, a panel of five doctors conducted a post-mortem examination on the bullet-riddled bodies at the Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital's mortuary, after which they were handed over to their relatives.

"*Yeh asmani faisla hai* [This is divine justice]. The State government is trying to maintain law and order and believes in zero tolerance against crime," Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Khanna told mediapersons. "The manner of the murder could not be justified, but one must also remember that those who were killed were no saints," BJP MP Subrat Pathak said, noting that the brothers were wanted in connection with dozens of heinous crime cases.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held a high-level meeting late on Saturday night and on Sunday instructing the officials to be vigilant, and vowing to take strict action against those spreading rumours, according to a government statement, which also noted that the assailants had posed as journalists, carrying microphones and cameras.

"Naturally, there is no checking of journalists. It is the result of tight law and order that all three were caught immediately... The incident was going live on the media. If the police had retaliated, innocent media personnel would have been killed. Because of this, the police exercised restraint and only took action to nab the attackers," the statement said.

Ahmed had been a Samajwadi Party (SP) MP and was accused of murdering Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA Raju Pal, but both parties condemned the killings. BSP chief Mayawati said the killing was "extremely serious and worrisome" and raised serious questions on the law and order situation in the State, asking the Supreme Court to take cognisance of the incident. "When someone can be shot dead amid a police cordon, then what about the safety of the general public?" SP chief Akhilesh Yadav asked, adding that the BJP government would face the consequences for its "*thoko* (shoot down)" approach. While maintaining that criminals should be given harsh punishments, the Congress said this should be done under the rule of law, as subverting or violating the rule of law is dangerous for democracy. The Asaduddin Owaisi-led All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen demanded the dismissal of the State government, while the Trinamool Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) alleged "brazen anarchy" and "official connivance".

G-7 Ministers commit to work for carbon-free electricity by 2035

On final day of conference in Sapporo, proposal to have a deadline for phasing out coal gets shot down as final text gives leeway for investment in gas as a stopgap arrangement; participants also agree to speed up clean energy investments

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The participants on Sunday also agreed to accelerating solar and wind energy investments to produce 1,000 GW by 2030. REUTERS

Climate and Energy Ministers and envoys from G-7 countries on Sunday committed to work towards ensuring carbon-free electricity production by 2035 and "accelerating" the phase- out of coal. This was part of an agreement by the countries at the end of a two-day conference in Sapporo, Japan, ahead of the G-7 summit in Hiroshima this May. A proposal to have a 2030 deadline for phasing out coal was shot down and the final text gives leeway for continued investment in gas, on the grounds that it could be a stopgap against energy shortfalls, Reuters reported.

Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav had also participated in the summit with India being invited as a 'guest', in the context of its presidency of the G-20. At the United Nations-Conference of Parties (COP) meeting in Glasgow in 2021, India had objected to language in the agreement to "phase out" and pushed instead for a "phase down" of coal. At the COP meeting in Sharm el Sheikh last year, India pushed for a proposal to phase out all fossil fuel sources, including coal and gas. India and China are significantly dependent on coal for electricity, whereas several developed countries, including the United States, Japan, Canada and Europe, are reliant on gas reserves. The latter however did not find mention in the final text of the Sharm el Sheikh agreement.

The participants on Sunday also agreed to accelerating solar and wind energy investments to produce 1,000 gigawatt (GW) by 2030 from solar power and 150 GW of wind power from off-shore platforms. This, they said, would be in line with recent reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that repeat the need to ensure that global temperatures not increase by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius of pre-industrial levels by the end of the century.

"We reaffirm that fossil fuel subsidies are inconsistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies is a key component of delivering on... the Paris Agreement. We reaffirm our commitment to the elimination of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies by 2025," the text of the final agreement noted. "We highlight that we ended new direct government support for unabated international thermal coal power generation by the end of 2021 and public support for the international unabated fossil fuel energy sector in 2022, except in limited circumstances clearly defined by each country consistent with a 1.5 degrees Celsius warming limit and the goals of the Paris Agreement. We will each provide an update on our approach to implementation by the end of 2023."

'Need assistance'

Mr. Yadav, in his remarks on Saturday, had said that developing countries too needed finance, technology and assistance from developed countries for transitioning away from fossil fuels. Reaching targets on carbon neutrality and increased ambition "will not fly" unless they were made keeping principles of equity and climate justice at their centre, he added.

Madhura Joshi, senior associate, E3G, a climate change think-tank, said: "I hoped for stronger and bolder action from the G-7. They need to step up their climate commitments and demonstrate them in practice. However, despite mixed messages, they have emphasised the role of clean energy in strengthening energy security and pledged to phase out unabated fossil fuels."

(With Reuters inputs)

Congress poll promise turns ammunition against AAP

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

A day after Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced a pension of ₹1,500 to all the 9,000 women (above 18 years of age) of Spiti, one of the 'tribal areas' of the State, as a part of the Congress's pre-poll guarantee, the party unit in neighbouring Punjab got the political ammunition to target the Aam Aadmi Party in the run-up to the Jalandhar Lok Sabha byelection.

On the occasion of the 76th Himachal Day event held on April 15 at Kaza in the Spiti sub-division of Lahaul-Spiti district, Mr. Sukhu said that the pension would be given, starting from June 2023 in the second phase. After the announcement, Congress members have decided to reach out to voters in Punjab by starting a door-to-door campaign, to convey the message around the steps being taken on its key election promise, while the AAP is yet to fulfil its promises.

Show of strength by Maharashtra Opposition

The Hindu Bureau
PUNE

Amid speculation about the alleged fragility of the *Maha Vikas Aghadi* troika, the Opposition staged a strong show of solidarity in Nagpur on Sunday, with Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray taking on the ruling BJP, accusing it of having transformed democracy into "a *dahi handi*, breaking governments wherever they saw an opportunity".

Attacking the ruling Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena-BJP government, Mr. Thackeray said Maharashtra was "a State of heroes, not traitors who stabbed people behind the back".

"This is an unseasonal government... Everyone today must strive to defend the Constitution. What is this government doing to alleviate the plight of its farmers reeling under frequent hailstorms. In contrast, in our [previous MVA government's] very first Assembly Session in Nagpur, we had not only announced but also implemented the waiver of crop loans to farmers up to ₹2 lakh," he said, addressing the second 'Vajramooth' rally of the MVA alliance.

Police say train arson 'act of terror'; UAPA invoked

Mithosh Joseph
KOZHIKODE

Investigation continues: The police are still in pursuit of concrete evidence that would shed light on Saifi's true motive. S.K. MOHAN

Establishing the Kozhikode train arson of April 2 as an act of terror, the Kerala Police's special team has invoked sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act against the prime suspect, Shahrukh Saifi, as his police custody ends in two days.

The move has also set the stage for the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to take over the case. A senior police officer told *The Hindu* on Sunday that Saifi was charged under Section 16 (Punishment for Terrorist Act) of the UAPA. At present, sections of the Indian Penal Code, including 302 (murder), and the Railways Act have been charged against Saifi since the police secured his custody for interrogation and evidence collection.

Saifi was arrested two days after he reportedly doused unsuspecting passengers with petrol and ignited a blaze in the D1 coach of the Alappuzha-Kannur Executive Express at Elathur, near Kozhikode. Three panic-stricken passengers who jumped off the train died, while nine sustained burns.

The police said that Saifi would be produced in the Judicial First Class Magistrate Court on Tuesday after collecting evidence from the crime scene at Elathur. Last week, he was taken to the two coaches (parked at Kannur station) and Shoranur from where he had purchased petrol and boarded the train.

Cyber watch

Meanwhile, police sources said that investigators had meticulously sifted through a vast trove of cyber forensic data. Their sights were set on the social media activity and call detail records of Saifi, as well as his intriguing connections in Noida in Uttar Pradesh where he worked as a carpenter and Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi where he resided.

The police said that numerous individuals from Saifi's inner circle had already found themselves under the scrutiny of Anti-Terror Squads from various States.

However, the police are still in pursuit of concrete evidence that would shed light on Saifi's true motive and reveal the shadowy figure who aided him in orchestrating the crime. Despite the relentless efforts of investigators, who have also combed through a staggering 100 plus CCTV camera footage from multiple locations, Saifi remained tight-lipped.

Saifi's journey to Kerala aboard the Sampark Kranti Express on March 31 still remained shrouded in mystery, police sources said.

11 die of heat stroke during govt. function in Navi Mumbai

The Hindu Bureau
PUNE

At least 11 persons reportedly died of heat stroke while attending the Maharashtra Bhushan Award ceremony at Kharghar in Navi Mumbai on Sunday, the Chief Minister's Office said.

More than 20 persons were said to be undergoing treatment at the MGM Hospital in Navi Mumbai for heat stroke, dehydration and other health-related issues.

According to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who visited the patients, 11 persons had died from heat stroke. Another 24 persons became ill and were rushed to the hospital, where they are currently undergoing treatment.

"The State government will give a compensation of ₹5 lakh to the kin of each of the deceased and bear expenses for treating those who have been admitted to the hospital," Mr. Shinde said.

The death toll is expected to rise, fear authorities.

Poor provisions

According to sources, thousands of people had gathered at the sprawling 306-acre ground at Khargar where social activist Dattatreya Narayan alias Appasaheb Dharmadhikari was given the Maharashtra Bhushan award by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the presence of CM Shinde, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis and other dignitaries.

According to sources, provision of tents was limited to the dignitaries on the dais, members of the media, and a select few VIPs.

A majority of the people, who began thronging the venue hours before the event after having travelled from different parts of Maharashtra, were exposed to the scorching heat.

More than 120 people suffered from heat-related health issues, said officials.

The event, for which people had started gathering since morning, began around 11.30 a.m. and went on till around 1 p.m. The ground was packed with followers of the Shree Sadasya (Mr. Dharmadhikari's organisation) to witness the function. The seating arrangement for the attendees was made in the open, and there was no shed to offer protection from the heat.

Fabricated case, says Delhi CM after 9-hour questioning by CBI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on his way to address the media before his questioning by the CBI on Sunday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday questioned Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the Delhi excise policy case for more than nine hours.

Speaking to presspersons from his residence after the questioning, Mr. Kejriwal said, "The entire case is fabricated and they do not have any proof. It is a result of dirty politics."

He said the entire case was being built to "bring down the Aam Aadmi Party [AAP]", but it was a party of honest individuals working to bring about a change that political parties over the past 75 years were unable to accomplish. "I was asked 56 questions by the CBI and have answered them all. I thank the CBI officers for treating me with respect and conducting the questioning extending all hospitality and courtesy," he said.

The CBI and Enforcement Directorate (ED) are investigating the Delhi government's now-scrapped excise policy for 2021-22 that allegedly favoured certain liquor dealers, an allegation that the AAP has strongly denied. The agency summoned Mr. Kejriwal seeking his appearance as a witness before the investigation team to question him on the inputs generated during the probe, CBI sources said. The ED, in its second chargesheet against 17 accused, alleged that a part of the "kickback" was used for the AAP's poll campaign ahead of the Goa Assembly election in 2022. The ED, in its chargesheet, said that one of the accused, Sameer Mahandru, allegedly told the agency that "the new excise policy was a brainchild of Arvind Kejriwal".

'Legalising same-sex unions will improve mental health outcomes among LGBTQIA+ individuals'

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

As much as 93% of the survey respondents believe marriage equality will reduce mental health-related distress. EMMANUAL YOGINI

With the Supreme Court scheduled to hear petitions seeking legal recognition for same-sex marriages on Tuesday, a study among Indians has found that legalisation of such unions will have a "positive impact on mental health of LGBTQIA+ individuals".

The study titled "The anticipated impact of LGBTQIA+ marriage equality legislation on Indian society and mental health", based on an online survey conducted by a group of six researchers, found that legalisation of same-sex marriage and marriage equality would lead to improvement in wellbeing, legal safety and access to legal rights. "While legalisation of marriage will not guarantee societal acceptance, many respondents mentioned that legalisation of marriage would create a stronger sense of community and social support and enable them to secure essential rights," said Megha Sharda, a neuroscientist and co-author of the study.

The researchers conducted the survey to understand the attitude of Indians towards legalisation of same-sex marriage. Out of a sample size of 5,825 respondents, 95% welcomed legalisation of marriage for LGBTQIA+ individuals and 93% believed marriage equality will reduce mental health-related distress in youth. The study also found that decriminalisation of Section 377 by the Supreme Court had a positive impact on the mental health of LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Also, 93% of the respondents believed that legalisation of same-sex marriage will improve mental health outcomes, including reduced levels of anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, grief, etc., in LGBTQIA+ youth and families. Further, it would bring visibility to the lived experiences of queer couples. In the study, the authors quote a respondent who says that "to be formally and socially able to come out to the society as a legitimate couple and family unit will provide immense impetus to self-esteem, besides lowering of anxiety and depression for the gay community. They have the right as everyone else to be with whom they love, have children, cohabit, own assets together and more".

Heat wave in WB: schools, colleges to shut for 7 days

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

The West Bengal government on Sunday issued a notification asking schools, colleges, educational institutes and universities, including private institutes, to remain closed from April 17 to 22 because of a severe heatwave.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the priority remained that people did not venture out in the heat in the afternoon and not suffer from heat stroke. She also announced that summer vacations will start early from May 2.

Two weeks before killing, Atiq moved SC to seek protection

The top court dismissed his plea and observed that the Uttar Pradesh State machinery would take care of his protection in case of threat to life

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Two weeks before gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed was shot dead while under police escort in Prayagraj, the Supreme Court had dismissed his plea seeking protection during his custody with the Uttar Pradesh Police in the Umesh Pal murder case.

Atiq, 60, and his brother Ashraf were shot dead at point-blank range by three men posing as presspersons in the middle of a media interaction on Saturday night while police personnel were escorting them to a medical college for a check-up.

On March 28, the Supreme Court dismissed Atiq's plea, and observed that the Uttar Pradesh State machinery would take care of his protection in case of a threat to his life.

Atiq Ahmed

When his plea came up for hearing before the top court, a Bench of Justices Ajay Rastogi and Bela M. Trivedi granted him liberty to approach the Allahabad High Court for protection after he had claimed that his life was under threat while being in the custody of the Uttar Pradesh Police.

"Since he is in judicial custody, the Uttar Pradesh State machinery will take care of his protection in case of threat to his life," the court said.

"It is not a case where this court is going to interfere. Liberty granted to move appropriate application before the High Court. Whatever is the process prescribed under law will be followed," the Bench had said.

Atiq sought protection claiming that he and his family had been falsely "roped in" as accused in the Umesh Pal murder case in Prayagraj.

Umesh Pal, a key witness in the 2005 killing of then BSP MLA Raju Pal, and his security guards were killed in a shooting on February 24.

Six of 10 people named in Umesh Pal murder case FIR killed so far

Press Trust of India
LUCKNOW

With Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf being shot dead by assailants in Prayagraj on Saturday, three of the family's four members named in the Umesh Pal murder case had been killed.

Ten people were named in the first information report (FIR) registered at the Doomanganj police station of Prayagraj on February 25, a day after Umesh Pal was killed. Atiq's son Asad was also named as a shooter alongside six others described as shooters.

Apart from Atiq and Ashraf, four others named in the FIR – Asad, Arbaaz, Vijay Chaudhary, alias Usman, and Ghulam – had also been killed.

Of the seven people seen in a CCTV footage that captured the Umesh Pal killing, Arbaaz, who allegedly drove the SUV carrying the attackers, was killed in an encounter on February 27.

Shooter Vijay Chaudhary was killed in an encounter in Prayagraj on March 6. Asad Ahmed and Ghulam were killed in another encounter with the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force in Jhansi on April 13.

The remaining three shooters – Guddu Muslim, Sabir and Armaan – are absconding. Atiq's wife, Shaista Parveen, is also on the run.

Atiq, a former SP legislator, had earlier expressed apprehension that he could be killed by the Uttar Pradesh Police while being brought to Prayagraj from the Ahmedabad prison, where he was lodged in connection with another case.

When he was being taken to the city for Thursday's court appearance, he made a similar remark.

"I am totally reduced to dust, but please don't trouble the women and children of my family now," the 60-year-old told presspersons from inside a police van.

After the Umesh Pal murder, Akhilesh Yadav had flagged the law and order issue in the Assembly.

In the heated debate, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had accused the Samajwadi Party of sheltering gangsters such as Atiq, and said the government would grind the mafia to dust (*mittee mein mila denge*).

Last days of Atiq Ahmed

The former MP who faced nearly 100 criminal cases had a harrowing few weeks till his end came in a blood-curdling point-blank shooting by three youth in Prayagraj on April 15

- **February 24:** Umesh Pal, a witness in the killing of MLA Raju Pal in 2005, is murdered along with two security personnel
- **February 27:** The Doomanganj police kill one Arbaz in encounter; the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force arrests Sadaqat
- **March 5:** ₹2.5-lakh reward announced on each of the five shooters in the Umesh Pal case, including Atiq's son Asad
- **March 6:** Another accused, Vijay Choudhary, killed in encounter

- **March 11:** Reward of ₹25,000 announced on Atiq's wife, Shaista Parween, in the Umesh Pal case
- **March 13:** ₹5-lakh reward announced on the five shooters
- **March 27:** Atiq and his brother Ashraf brought from the Sabarmati Jail in Gujarat to Prayagraj for court appearance
- **March 28:** A court convicts Atiq and two others in the 2006 kidnapping of Umesh Pal
- **April 7:** The police double reward on Atiq's wife
- **April 13:** Atiq's son Asad and his aide Ghulam killed in police encounter in Jhansi

Centre to draft SOP for safety of journalists

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry will draft a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the safety and security of journalists following the April 15 incident in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj when don-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed and his brother, Khalid Azim, were shot dead by three persons posing as TV news reporters.

A senior government official said on Sunday that an SOP was in the works for the safety of mediapersons when they follow an accused or interview them in police or judicial custody. The decision to draft the SOP was taken on the directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the official said.

The three accused carried identity cards, a microphone and a camera. The first information report (FIR) said the assailants threw the microphone and camera and opened fire with semi-automatic weapons when the duo was speaking with reporters. It said one of the accused was injured in cross-firing and some mediapersons were also injured. It said some more mediapersons were injured in a stampede-like situation.

This is not the first time that the Ministry has expressed caution on the safety of journalists.

On October 20, 2017, the Ministry, in an advisory to the States, said, "From time to time, incidents of attack on journalists/media persons are reported in the media. All such cases need to be investigated promptly to ensure that criminals get prosecuted in a time-bound manner. States should also take all preventive and deterrent action as deemed required."

University files defamation case against Kejriwal

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat University has sued Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and AAP MP Sanjay Singh with criminal defamation over their statements against the varsity over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's academic degree. Acting on the complaint, a local court in Ahmedabad has issued summons to Mr. Kejriwal and Mr. Singh.

Back in Kolar, Rahul calls Adani 'symbol of corruption'

The Hindu Bureau
KOLAR

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday termed industrialist Gautam Adani a "symbol of corruption" in the country, and reiterated that despite his disqualification as an MP, he would continue to raise questions on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's relationship with Mr. Adani. He was speaking in Kolar, the place where just over four years ago, he made the "Modi surname" remark that has now led to his sentence and disqualification from the Lok Sabha.

"They [BJP] do not want me to talk in Parliament. They are afraid that I will raise questions on Adani. They disqualified me from Parliament thinking that I will remain silent and I will be scared. I am not scared. I will again ask the Prime Minister," he said, addressing a massive gathering of Congress workers.

"Till I get answers, I will not stop. Disqualify me or put me in jail, it will not affect me," he added.

The Jai Bharath Satyagraha rally in Kolar, about 80 km from Bengaluru, is being organised to protest against his disqualification

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the Jai Bharat Satyagraha Yatra at Kolar on Sunday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

and with a call to save democracy. The event was also the first in a series of programmes planned for Mr. Gandhi ahead of the Karnataka Assembly election on May 10.

Mr. Gandhi said: "In Parliament, I questioned the Prime Minister about his relationship with Adani. First, they switched off my mic and later the BJP Ministers told lies about me. When I sought to respond as per the right of a member, the Speaker did not allow me. They do not want me to speak in Parliament and hence disqualified me."

Mr. Gandhi said that for the first time in the history, ruling party members stalled Parliament whereas it is the Opposition that normally obstructs the proceedings.

Responding to accusations that he insulted the OBCs through his "Modi surname" remark, Mr. Gandhi challenged the PM to reveal the details of the caste census conducted in 2011 so that all the communities could be part of country's development.

"Give reservation to SC/STs based on their population. I challenge you to increase the reservation matrix beyond 50%. Just about 7% of Government of India Secretaries come from OBC, SC and ST communities. Accept the challenge, then we can debate whether I insulted OBCs or not," he said.

Satya Pal's statement shows how consultation was bypassed: NC, PDP

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Sunday said former J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik's account of the removal of J&K's special status under Article 370 in 2019 showed that the mandated consultation mechanism had been completely bypassed by the Centre.

"An appointed individual of the GoI (Government of India) was deciding for 14 million people and he brazenly says that it was their [the BJP's] government [decision], as '*Mujhe kya, unko karna tha to karte, na karna tha to na karte, mujhe kya tha*' (What's it to me? If they wanted to do it, they would; if they didn't want to do it, they wouldn't). This is how the fate of the people of J&K was decided on that day. This is how they

Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi

lynched and murdered democracy," senior NC leader and former Minister Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi said.

He was referring to the statement made by Mr. Malik in an interview recently.

"I was told a day before that a letter has been sent to me which I should open in the morning and get it approved at that very moment. It was their [the BJP's] government [at the Centre]. Whether they wanted to keep it or remove it, why would I object?" Mr. Malik said in the interview.

Mr. Mehdi said Clause 3 of Article 370 of the Constitution says that abrogation could not happen without the concurrence of the States, in this case the J&K's Constituent Assembly, that is, the will of the people.

Senior PDP leader Naeem Akhtar said any attempt at "tampering with Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir should have been essentially ratified by the J&K's Constituent Assembly of 1951".

Former Chief Minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said the killing of Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf in Uttar Pradesh was a diversionary tactic to shift attention from the revelations over the Pulwama attack and corruption by the Union government.

Satya Pal Malik 'vindicated' Pakistan on Pulwama attack, says Islamabad

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The allegations of former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik regarding the Pulwama attack of February 14, 2019 have proved the point that the Modi government has used the incident to "advance Hindutva agenda", said the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan on Sunday.

A press note issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan said that Mr. Malik's comments "vindicated" Pakistan's position on the incident.

"His disclosures demonstrate how the Indian leadership has habitually used the bogey of terrorism from Pakistan to advance its sham victimhood narrative and the Hindutva agenda, clearly for domestic political gains," said the press release.

The interview shows Mr. Malik saying that he expressed his opinion about the government's failure in ensuring security for Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel who died in the attack. "I told it to the Prime Minister in the evening that this has happened due to our fault. Had we given the aircraft, this wouldn't have happened. To which he told me that I should keep quiet now," said Mr. Malik to veteran interviewer Karan Thapar.

The Pulwama terror strike had triggered active hostilities between India and Pakistan and led to the Balakot strike of February 26.

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD DIVISION KHETRI
No.6552-63 Date : 31/3/23
Notice Inviting Bid No. 22/2022-23
Bids for (08 Nos) Road Work are invited from interested bidders upto 12:00 PM dated 31.03.2023 tp 19.04.2023. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in) of the state; and PWD departmental website. The approximate value of the procurement is Rs. 2320.74 Lac.
NIB No. PWD2223A5063
UBN No.
1. PWD2223WSOB20527 2. PWD2223WSOB20528 3. PWD2223WSOB20529
4. PWD2223WSOB20530 5. PWD2223WSOB20531 6. PWD2223WSOB20532
7. PWD2223WSOB20533 8. PWD2223WSOB20544
Executive Engineer
DIPR/C/5262 **PWD Division Khetri**

RAJASTHAN MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.
(A Govt. of Rajasthan Undertaking)
Gandhi Block, Swasthya Bhawan, Tilak Marg, Jaipur – 302005, India
Tel No: 0141-2228066, 2228064, E-mail: edpssrmsc@rajasthan.gov.in
F.02(140)/RMSCL/PROCUREMENT/ Sanitary Napkin/NIPQ-02/2023/1604 Dated:- 31.03.2023
NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS
Applications on prescribed registration form are invited by RMSCL, Jaipur from bonafide MANUFACTURERS / LOAN LICENSEES / IMPORTERS only for empanelment/ registration of bidders, for supply of Sanitary Napkin, (Non-Drug Item) item code S99p. The last date of submission of duly filled up form along with documents and Bank Drafts is upto 6.00 PM of 18.04.2023 . Details of Registration form along with term & conditon etc. can be downloaded from State Public Procurement Portal website **https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** or **"https://sppp.rajsthan.gov.in"** or RMSCL website **"https://rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in"**. The duly filled up applications form along with all documents and Bank Drafts copies of challan may be submitted on **https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in**. **Firm which are already empanelled need not apply afresh.**
UBN- MSC2223GLOB00160
Raj.Samwad/C/23/559 **Executive Director(Proc) RMSCL**

मुख्यमंत्री निःशुल्क दवा योजना
RAJASTHAN MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.
(A Govt. of Rajasthan Undertaking)
Gandhi Block, Swasthya Bhawan, Tilak Marg, Jaipur – 302005, India
Phone No: 0141-2228066, 2228064 Website: www.rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in
CIN:U24232RJ2011SGC035067 E-mail : edpssrmsc@rajasthan.gon.in
Ref. No F.02(138)/RMSCL/Proc./S&S/short term NIB-07/2023/ 1623 Dated:06.04.2023
Short Term Notice Inviting E-Bid
Short term E-bids for rate contract cum supply and empanelment of following item are invited from eligible bidders:-

S. No.	Item Name /Description	Ref.No	UBN	Estimated Value Rs. in Crore	Time & Last date for bid submission
1.	SURGICALS (DRUG ITEM)	F.02(138)/RMSCL/ Proc./S&S/short term NIB-07/2023/ 1623 Dated:06.04.2023	MSC2324 GLOB 00002	7.62 crore	18.04.2023 up to 6.00 PM

Other particulars of the bids may be visited on the procurement portal **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** , **http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** and **www.rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in** and may be downloaded from there.
Raj.Samwad/C/23/524 **Executive Director (Procurement)**

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, वृत्त बारां
क्रमांक: 3696 दिनांक: 27.03.2023
निविदा सूचना संख्या 14/2022-23
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से **बजट घोषणा 2023-24 के अन्तर्गत नगर परिषद बारां, नगरपालिका अन्ता, मांगरोल, अटरू एवं छबड़ा में दर अनुबन्ध के आधार पर सड़कों के कार्यों हेतु** उपयुक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग राजस्थान में पंजीकृत संवेदकों एवं राज्य सरकार/ केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों/ केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग / डाक एवं दूर संचार विभाग / रेलवे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत संवेदकों, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के ए श्रेणी के संवेदकों के समकक्ष हो, से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई-प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट प्रक्रिया से ऑन लाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित विवरण वेब साईट http://dipr.rajasthan.gov.in व http://pwd.rajasthan.gov.in, http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है। यू.बी.एन. संख्या निम्नानुसार है।
इच्छुक संवेदकों को अपने डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेब साईट http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर रजिस्टर्ड होना आवश्यक है।
NIB Code: PWD2223A4974, UBN No.: 1. PWD2223WLOB20102, 2. PWD2223WLOB20103, 3. PWD2223WLOB20105, 4. PWD2223WLOB20106, 5. PWD2223WLOB20107
DIPR/C/5249/2023 अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, सा.नि.वि. वृत्त बारां

e-mail: eerwsskld@gmail.com ; eerwss_kld@nic.in, Phone No: 06670-230784
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KALAHANDI RWS&S DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA
INVITATION OF BID THROUGH e -TENDERING
Bid Identification No-03/SE/RWSS/2023-24/Bpt Dated.13.04.2023
01. Name of the work :- As per ANNEXURE - A

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding on office hour only		Date of Opening (Technical Bid)
		From	To	
1	2	3	4	5
Superintending Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna	03/SE/RWSS/ 2023-24/Bpt Dated- 13.04.2023	20.04.2023 10.00 AM	11.05.2023 05.30 PM	12.05.2023 10.00 AM onwards

Cost of tender paper to be made online payment system.
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal http://tenderodisha.gov.in.
The original documents should be scanned and uploaded.
O-51: **Superintending Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna**
OIPR-25005/11/0003/2324

idco Your power to grow ISO 9001 & 14001 Corporation | ODISHA NEW OPPORTUNITIES
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (P&C), IDCO, IDCO TOWERS, BHUBANESWAR - 751022
Tender Call Notice No. H.O./P&C/EST-E-1748/01/2021/ 11210 Date : 13.04.2023
NOTICE INVITING TENDER UNDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Value of Work (Approx.)	Period of Completion
1.	Laying of treated water rising main from Odisha Biotech farm Junction to Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya at Andharua, Bhubaneswar.	₹ 75.10 Lakhs	03 (Three) Calendar Months

I. Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-Line for Bidding	
		From	To
1	2	3	4
Chief General Manager (P&C), IDCO, IDCO Towers, Bhubaneswar-751022.	Bid ID no - P&C/ EST/ E-05/2023-24	17.00 Hours of dt. 20.04.2023	17.00 Hours of dt. 06.05.2023

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in . Corrigendum or addendum if any will not be published in news papers and can only be seen in the e-procurement portal www.tenderodisha.gov.in as well as IDCO website www.idco.in.
CAD-181: Sd/- **Chief General Manager (P&C), IDCO, Bhubaneswar**
OIPR-14003/11/0010/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, EASTERN CIRCLE-I, CANTONMENT ROAD, CUTTACK.
Email id :- seeccuttack@gmail.com
"e" Procurement Notice No.ACE,EC-I/02 of 2023-24 (On-line)

1.	Name of Work	:	Improvement to Devi left embankment from RD44.900Km to RD52.360 Km & RD 54.765 Km to RD 58.000 Km. Bid Identification No. ACE,EC-I JID 02 of 2023-24.
2.	Tender Paper Cost (Non-refundable)	:	Rs.10,000.00 (On-line)
3.	EMD	:	Rs.8,07,400.00 (On-line)

4. Bid details are as follows.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Tender Amount Rs.in Lakh) (Approx.)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding		Date of Opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)
					From	To	
Additional Chief Engineer, Eastern Circle-I, Cuttack	ACE, EC-I JID 02 of 2023-24	807.40	'A' & 'Special'	9(Nine) Calendar months	18.04.2023 at 10.00 hrs.	02.05.2023 upto 17.30 hrs.	03.05.2023 at 11.30 hrs.

Other terms and conditions can be seen from the Govt. website "**www.tendersodisha.gov.in**". All corrigendum / cancellation of tender if any, will only be uploaded in the above web site.
A-27: **Additional Chief Engineer, Eastern Circle-I, Cuttack.**
OIPR-32370/11/0002/2324

It's a brother vs brother clash again in Soraba

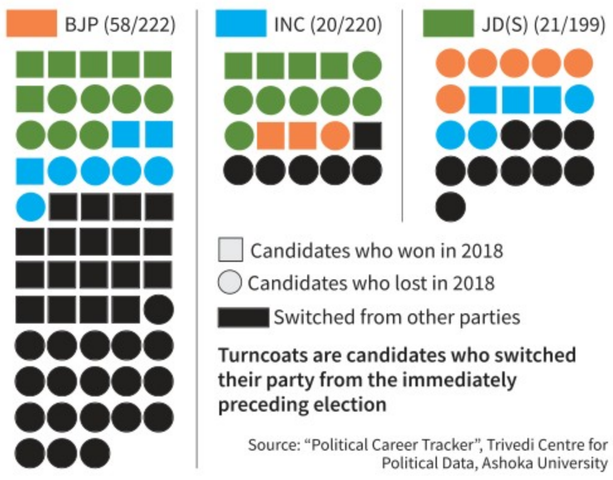
Traditional rivals and sons of a former Chief Minister, the late S. Bangarappa, are pitted against each other in the Soraba constituency in Shivamogga district this time too. While Kumar Bangarappa is contesting for the BJP, Madhu Bangarappa is contesting on Congress ticket. This has been a long-standing fight for the political legacy of their father from the constituency that he once represented.

In 2018, Mr. Kumar had defeated Mr. Madhu. The former had joined the BJP ahead of the polls, quitting the Congress. The latter, then MLA for Soraba, was seeking re-election as a JD(S) candidate. Mr. Madhu joined the Congress in 2021. The late Bangarappa, a Congress Chief Minister between 1990 and 1992, had been with the BJP, JD(S) and SP too.

Kumar Bangarappa

Defect, contest, win, repeat

In the 2018 Karnataka Assembly polls, of the 222 candidates fielded by the BJP, 26% (58 candidates) were turncoats. The Congress had 20 (9%) such candidates. Of the 58 turncoats who contested from the BJP, 13 were from the JD(S) and eight from the Congress. Of the 20 fielded by the Congress, three were from the BJP


BJP (58/222)
INC (20/220)
JD(S) (21/199)
Candidates who won in 2018
Candidates who lost in 2018
Switched from other parties
Turncoats are candidates who switched their party from the immediately preceding election
Source: "Political Career Tracker", Trivedi Centre for Political Data, Ashoka University

In 4 seats, NOTA was higher than victory margins

In 2018, four constituencies in north Karnataka — Badami, Kungol, Maski and Aland — saw victory margins that were smaller than the votes polled under the None of the Above (NOTA) option. In Badami, then Chief Minister Siddaramaiah defeated BJP's Sreeramulu by 1,696 votes, while 2,007 votes were polled under NOTA.

We will form the government. However, the BJP will try to use 40% commission money to destabilise it

RAHUL GANDHI
Congress leader

If defections, anti-incumbency trend do not throw a challenge at ruling BJP, history does

Amid the absence of a strong leadership face and rebellion in its local unit, the party in Karnataka relies heavily on its national leaders, but the State, in the past 38 years, has developed a reputation for never returning a ruling party to power

NEWS ANALYSIS

Bageshree S.
BENGALURU

Gaining ground: While the BJP's vote share increased from 4.14% in 1989 to 36.22% in 2018, the tally too increased from four to 104 seats during this period. FILE PHOTO

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Karnataka has to face not only the anti-incumbency factor in the May 10 Assembly election but also the State's electoral history as none of the ruling parties has retained power in the past 38 years.

Though the BJP's central leadership is leaving no stone unturned to reverse this, it is well aware of the gravity of the situation. For the first time, the party is facing a serious threat of disappointed ticket aspirants turning rebels, and its former Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi has left the party while its former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar is getting ready to quit the party.

The BJP, which formed a government with its veteran leader B.S. Yediyurappa as Chief Minister in July 2019 by ousting the Janata Dal(S)-Congress coalition government through a series of defections, faces allegations of misgovernance, groupism and corruption.

Though the incumbent Chief Minister, Basavaraj Bommai, succeeded Mr. Yediyurappa in July 2021, he took time to get a grip on the administration as he struggled with the transition of power. His dispensation faced allegations of demands for "40% commission" from contractors, though nobody filed a complaint before the authorities. Mr. Bommai's leadership of the State has also been marked by communal controversies, while the party's image took a beating with floods in several areas, including in Bengaluru, hitting infrastructure hard.

The main problem for the BJP is that it does not have a strong leadership face to project

However, Mr. Bommai seemed to be able find his bearings about a year after taking over and has since been taking efforts to retain power.

Beyond Yediyurappa

The party, whose core strength was its support base of Lingayats, a dominant community in the State, began realising that its political influence over the community diminished after the Lingayat strongman was made to step down as Chief Minister. To make amends, the Central leadership appointed Mr. Yediyurappa as a Parliamentary Board member of the party. It also increased reservation for the Lingayat community.

But the BJP's strategists know that the party is yet to get a full majority in the Assembly on its own. Even when the Lingayat community rallied behind Mr. Yediyurappa in 2008, it was short of a majority. In fact, it has been able to form the government only by engineering defections.

As this underscores the need for expanding its support base, the party has taken to social engineering by increasing reservation for the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) and also providing internal reservation to them.

The party wants to make inroads into the areas of Vokkaligas, another dominant community, by increasing reservation for them and winning them over through other means. For instance, a 108-foot statue of community icon and architect of Bengaluru city, Kempe Gowda, has been erected at the international airport in Devanahalli. The party has touched base with a few Vokkaliga leaders, including Independent MP Sumalatha, from the Vokkaliga heartland of Mandya, to reach out to the community over which the Opposition JD(S) has a strong influence.

Expanding base

The BJP believes that winning some 10 additional seats from the Old Mysore region could tilt the political balance as it has been able to win only eight of the total 48 seats in the districts of Ramanagara, Bengaluru Rural, Mandya, Mysuru, undivided Kolar and Chamarajanagar. But the party does not seem to have strong leaders from this region who could lead its campaign.

The party has also started efforts to win over microscopic communities among Other Backward Classes (OBC) and organised State conventions of OBCs, SCs and STs.

Cluster-wise, the BJP is focusing heavily on Bengaluru, which accounts for 28 of the total 224 Assembly seats in the State, and Belagavi, which has 18. In Bengaluru, the party won 15 seats, while in Belagavi, it has 13.

However, the main problem for the BJP is that it does not have a strong leadership face to project from Karnataka despite having 121 MLAs (before the recent death of two MLAs and resignation by rebels).

While its 80-year-old leader Mr. Yediyurappa has announced retirement from electoral politics, the party is yet to formally project its next chief ministerial candidate, though Mr. Bommai is at the helm.

In this situation, the BJP's central leadership has taken over the entire campaign as well as poll management and is projecting Prime Minister Narendra Modi as its face for the Assembly election. The party that has a strong organisational network in several areas has also adopted both macro and micro management strategies with the support of its booth-level members. While the BJP claims that it is seeking votes on the basis of its achievements, the party is also banking on a polarised political environment to tackle the anti-incumbency factor.

The BJP's vote share and its tally have been steadily increasing in the State since 1989, which is an indication that the party has been increasing its reach in the State. While its vote share increased from 4.14% in 1989 to 36.22% in 2018, the tally rose from four to 104 during this period.

Ticket losers licking their wounds after spoiling voters with expensive gifts

Sathish G.T.
HASSAN

One of the 30 venues where Hassan MLA Preetham Gowda conducted Astha Lakshmi pujas in March. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Unlike in previous elections, most MLAs seeking re-election and fresh ticket aspirants this time began distributing gifts to voters long before the election was even announced.

In Hassan, Preetham Gowda, BJP MLA, held a mega event for students and distributed cash prizes. A month before the election, he conducted Astha Lakshmi pujas in more than 30 localities. Each women devotee was given a sari and a picture of Goddess Lakshmi. Many aspirants distributed picture of deities along with gifts to instil the "fear of god" in voters against betrayal.

Horticulture Minister Munirathna distributed kitchen appliances to many voters in his Bengaluru constituency. A Congress MLA in the State capital is said to have distributed smart TVs to many houses. In Shivamogga, BJP aspirant K.E. Kanthesh distributed mosquito nets on his birthday.

According to a senior police officer, at least 85,000 saris were distributed in the Hassan Assembly constituency alone. "Earlier, they used to distribute saris by inviting women to a particular place. However, when the Election Commission instructed officers to stop such activities even before the Model Code of Conduct came into effect, they changed their strategy to doorstep delivery," he said.

This kind of decentralisation has made tracking malpractices tougher.

However, after the parties declared their candidates, those denied ticket despite having spent heavily on gifts were licking their wounds.

Karnataka keeps a distance from star-spangled politics

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

Leading Kannada actor Sudeep recently endorsed Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and announced he would campaign for any candidate that Mr. Bommai suggested, but stopped short of endorsing the BJP. To counter this, the Congress is said to have roped in Divya Spandana, better known by her screen name Ramya, who is a member of the party and a former MP.

This is in keeping with the tradition among Kannada film stars who have mostly campaigned for individuals but desisted from endorsing parties, unless they take the plunge into electoral politics themselves.

Lead actors Yash and Darshan campaigned for actor Sumalatha Ambareesh when she contested as an Independent candidate in Mandya in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. She was the wife of the late Ambareesh, who was probably the State's most successful film star-politician. His identity as a Vokkaliga from Mandya helped him in no small measure in his political career.

Actors who have tasted electoral success include Mukhyamantri Chandru, now in the Aam Aadmi Party; Anant Nag, who was associated with the Janata Party and became a Minister, and was recently rumoured to be joining the BJP, though he did not; Umashree and Ramya from the Congress; C.P. Yogeeshwar and B.C. Patil, who have been with multiple parties; and Shashi Kumar from the Janata Dal (U). In fact, Mr. Nag, Ms. Umashree, Mr. Yogeeshwar, Mr. Patil and another actor Jayamala have served as Ministers.

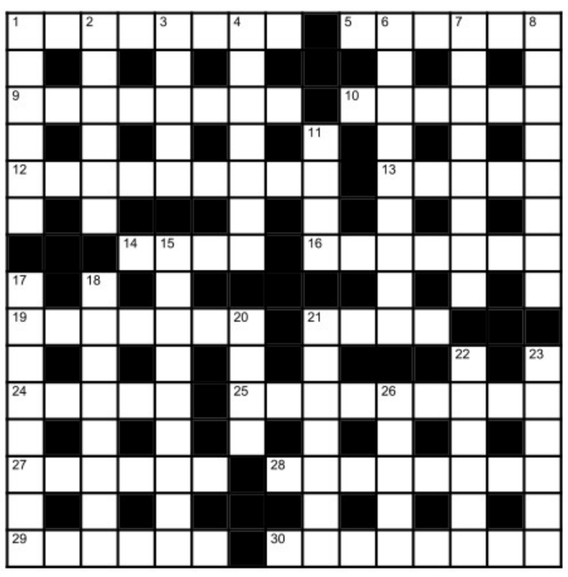
But these stars have had little ability to swing elections unlike those in neighbouring States. That opportunity was missed in 1980, when the State's most popular film idol, Dr. Rajkumar, led the Gokak movement and had the best chance to dominate the State's politics, but refused to take the plunge.

TH CROSSWORD + 13841

(set by KrisKross)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Last popular social media communication received by many (8)
5 & 22d Rugged aircraft? (6)
9 Desire a protective gear - close-fitting, say (8)
10 Provided entertainment using a bit of abstract thought (6)
12 Alternative source of energy from extremely clear, blue lakes (5,4)
13 Take care of some issues, running all round (5)
14 Flower from Dublin mostly (4)
16 Bore finished touring old city (7)
19 Where movies are shot about many small creatures (7)
21 How is heart filled with hope? (4)
24 Stirs awfully hot stew (5)
25 Stops accepting free money? Of course not (2,2,5)
27 Spot man with courage getting beheaded (6)
28 Cave in thicket sheltering everyone around (8)
29 Scientist returns for the end of a Rugby match (2-4)
30 Takes risks to cover corrupt husband's promises (8)

Down

1 Hotel with facility to house royal carriage (6)
2 Write about boxer from a neighbouring country (6)
3 North African in possession of time machine (5)
4 Place supports for furniture (7)
6 Drinks made from crushed almond seed for the most part (9)
7 One king surrounded by nurses at work - they give protection (8)
8 After retirement, setter perhaps starting to seek goals and blessings (8)
11 Tone down (4)
15 How to make idols unbreakable? (4-5)
17 Pilot from India trapped in useless war with Asian nation (8)
18 Very upset after a small defeat? This could help you take the heat (8)
20 Boy intercepting distress signal cries (4)
21 Most ladies adopting fitness regularly to become attractive (7)
22 See 5ac (6)
23 Idiot fencing enclosure for trees (6)
26 One expressing joy after crossing second runner (5)

SUDOKU

2			3		7			
1			4					
	4	9		5		1		
	7					8		5
	9	2	7		6	3	4	
4		3					7	
		6		3		7	2	
					1			6
			6		4			3

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

No.SS5771 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

Solution to previous puzzle

I	N	D	U	S	T	R	Y	
M		E		H		E		
A	M	B	I	E	N	C	E	
G		I		A		Y		C
E	N	T	E	R		C	H	A
S		C				L		S
	F	A	M	I	N	E		H
M		R		N				
E	I	D	E	T	I	C		P
D				E		H		A
I	N	F	I	R	M	A	R	Y
O		L		L		T		M
C	H	E	Q	U	E		B	E
R		E		D			N	
E	S	T	E	E	M		S	T

M	O	B	I	L	E			
	P		N		N			
R	E	D	A	C	T			
	R		P		I			
C	H	A	R	A	C	T	E	R
	S		T					E
H	A	I	R	C	U	T		
	O		A		Y			
P	A	N	A	M	A			
			B		E			
S	I	R	E	N				
	H		I		E			
M								
W	I	L	D	E	R			
	N		V		G		G	
S	T	R	A	T	E	G	Y	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

7	9	5	3	8	6	1	4	2
6	4	1	5	9	2	7	8	3
2	3	8	7	1	4	9	5	6
5	6	9	1	7	3	4	2	8
4	1	3	2	6	8	5	9	7
8	7	2	9	4	5	3	6	1
3	2	7	8	5	9	6	1	4
1	5	4	6	2	7	8	3	9
9	8	6	4	3	1	2	7	5

FAITH

Ayodhya without Rama

Sumantra conveys Rama's message to Dasaratha and Kausalya. He then describes the state of the city of Ayodhya, and the sorrow caused by Rama's departure, said Navalpakkam Vasudevachariar in a discourse. The horses, yoked to the royal chariot, which had dropped Rama at the edge of the forest, were reluctant to return to Ayodhya. They shed tears. Although Rama clearly told Sumantra that he was not to accompany Rama to the forest, Sumantra stayed back with Guha, hoping Rama would change His mind. But this did not happen, says Sumantra. So, he had to return to Ayodhya. As he entered Dasaratha's kingdom, Sumantra noticed that trees had withered, and plants were not bearing flowers. The water in ponds and lakes was not cool and soothing, but was warm. Gardens had dried up. Animals were not moving. Lotuses had wilted. Fish had disappeared from water bodies. Gardens bereft of human beings and birds, had lost their charm. As Sumantra made his entry into the city of Ayodhya, he was not greeted by anyone. Seeing the empty chariot, the people of Ayodhya had shed tears. In fact, to Sumantra, the whole of Ayodhya resembled Rama's mother Kausalya, grieving over the absence of her son.

Hearing Sumantra's description of the state of the kingdom, Dasaratha is remorseful over his decision to banish Rama from the kingdom. He admits that he should have consulted his ministers, who would have offered him a way out of the problem. Instead, he had paid heed to Kaikeyi, plunging the country into gloom. Dasaratha then asks Sumantra to take him to Rama soon.

HELSINKI

As Berlin shuts its nuclear reactors, Finland opens Europe's largest one

REUTERS

Finland's next-generation Olkiluoto 3 nuclear reactor, the largest in Europe, has gone into regular production after months of delays, its operator said on Sunday, hours after Germany ended its nuclear era. Olkiluoto 3, now producing around 14% of the country's power, is expected to remain operational for "at least the next 60 years". AFP

KATHMANDU

Narayan Prasad Saud becomes Nepal's new Foreign Minister

PTI

Nepali Congress leader Narayan Prasad Saud was on Sunday sworn in as Nepal's new Foreign Minister. His appointment comes ahead of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda's proposed visit to India next month and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has started preparation for the entourage to the southern neighbour. PTI

RUSSIA

In meeting with Chinese Defence Minister, Putin hails military ties

REUTERS

Russian President Vladimir Putin met Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu in Moscow and hailed military cooperation between the two nations, which have declared a "no limits" partnership. Beijing announced Mr. Li's visit last week, saying he would meet defence officials, but made no mention of meeting Mr. Putin. REUTERS

ISLAMABAD

Cash-strapped Pakistan increases price of petrol by Rs. 10 per litre

REUTERS

Cash-strapped Pakistan has increased the petrol price by rupees 10 per litre, amid the country's ongoing economic crisis and steep currency devaluation, further burdening citizens who are already hit by skyrocketing inflation. After the latest revision, petrol price has now risen to Pakistan rupees 282 per litre. PTI

61 dead after clashes between Sudan Army and rivals enter second day

More than 670 injured in the battle born out of a power struggle between the commander of the armed forces and the head of the Rapid Support Forces; both groups had agreed to a three-hour humanitarian pause in fighting on Sunday

Associated Press
KHARTOUM

The Sudanese military and a powerful paramilitary group battled for control of the chaos-stricken nation for a second day on Sunday, signalling they were unwilling to end hostilities despite mounting diplomatic pressure to cease fire.

Heavy fighting involving armoured vehicles, truck-mounted machine guns and war-planes raged on Sunday in the capital of Khartoum, the adjoining city of Omdurman and in flashpoints across the country. The rival forces are believed to have tens of thousands of fighters each in the capital alone.

Battle of Generals: Smoke billows above residential buildings in Khartoum on Sunday as fighting continued in Sudan. AFP

At least five civilians were killed and 78 wounded on Sunday, bringing the two-day toll to 61 dead and more than 670 wounded, said the Sudan Doctors' Syndicate. The group said it believes there were dozens of additional deaths among the rival forces.

The clashes are part of a power struggle between Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, the commander of the armed forces, and Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, the head of the Rapid Support Forces group. The two Generals are former allies who jointly orchestrated an October 2021 military coup that derailed Sudan's short-lived transition to democracy.

Growing tensions

In recent months, internationally backed negotiations revived hopes for such a transition, but growing tensions between Gen. Burhan and Gen. Dagalo eventually delayed a deal with political parties.

Volker Perthes, the UN envoy for Sudan, announced that both Gen. Burhan and Gen. Dagalo agreed to a three-hour humanitarian pause in fighting on Sunday.

An hour after the pause was meant to have started in the late afternoon, regular exchanges of guns and heavy weapons firing could still be heard in parts of central Khartoum, even intensifying in some areas. The clashes come as most Sudanese are preparing to celebrate the major holiday that marks the end of the holy month of Ramzan, when Muslims traditionally fast from sunrise to sunset.

On Sunday, the World Food Programme said it temporarily suspended operations in Sudan after three agency employees were killed in clashes the previous day and an aircraft used by the WFP was damaged.

Lula moots joint talks with China, UAE on Russia war

Agence France-Presse
ABU DHABI

Brazil's President on Sunday said he discussed joint mediation for Russia's war in Ukraine with China and the United Arab Emirates, accusing the U.S. and Europe of prolonging the conflict.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who was wrapping up an official visit to China and the UAE after returning for a third term in office, said the two countries and others should join a "political G-20" to try to end the war.

The veteran leftist also remarked that the war was caused "by decisions made by two countries".

"President Putin doesn't take any initiatives to stop the war. (President Volodymyr) Zelensky from Ukraine doesn't take any initiatives to stop the war," Mr. Lula, speaking through an official translator, told reporters in Abu Dhabi.

Whirlwind visit: Lula, left, with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan during an official reception in Abu Dhabi. AFP

'That's enough'

"Europe and the U.S. continue to give their way of contribution to continue the war. So they have to sit around the table and say, 'That's enough'."

He also lashed out at the dollar's dominance in global trade, calling for a new currency for transactions between the BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The 77-year-old said he spoke to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and Chinese President Xi Jinping, about forming a group of countries to mediate, styled after the G-20 group of advanced economies.

Four killed, several injured in U.S. shooting

Associated Press
DADEVILLE

Investigators were gathering evidence on Sunday at an Alabama dance studio where four persons were killed and multiple others were injured during a shooting on Saturday night at a teenager's birthday party.

The shooting happened around 10:30 p.m. in Dadeville, officials said. There was no initial confirmation about what led to the shooting. It was not immediately known if a suspect was in custody.

"There were four lives tragically lost in this incident and there's been a multitude of injuries," the official said on Sunday morning.

Kishida vows safety of G-7 after 'smoke bomb'

Reuters
TOKYO

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, a day after he was evacuated from an apparent attack, vowed on Sunday to do everything possible to ensure the safety of meetings of the Group of Seven industrial powers through next month.

Mr. Kishida escaped unhurt after a suspect threw a smoke bomb during an election campaign stop at a fishing port.

Mr. Kishida said Japan must not allow acts of violence that attack the foundation of democracy.

The incident was an eerie reminder of the assassination last July of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Sri Lanka at 75 is a failed state, says former President Kumaratunga

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Despite possessing enviable social indicators at the time of Independence in 1948, Sri Lanka, at 75, is a "failed state", former President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga said on Sunday.

"Seventy-five years is a long time for a nation to achieve considerable progress. Even after 450 years of destruction by colonial rulers, at Independence, Sri Lanka possessed some of the best socio-economic indicators. Today, at 75, Sri Lanka is a failed state," she said, delivering the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Madanjeet Singh Memorial Lecture of 2023, in an online event, organised by the South Asia Foundation and the Asian College of Journalism, Chennai.

"We are incapable of managing the affairs of the state," said the 77-year-old former head of state, who hails from one of Sri Lanka's most powerful political clans.

Chandrika Kumaratunga

"The government has declared bankruptcy – a very rare situation for any country in the world; the economy is in tatters; peasant agriculture and small and medium industries are struggling to survive, or have already closed down; tourism sector is at an all-time low; large industries are retrenching employees and new jobs will be a long time coming," Ms. Kumaratunga said.

While she had earlier blamed the Rajapaksas for the country's economic collapse, she underscored corruption and Sri Lanka's failure at "essential nation building" as key factors leading to the current crisis.

"Widespread corruption at every level", had become the "gospel of Sri Lankan politics", and had seeped down the major pillars of democratic governance, including the judiciary, the police, and the public service. Further, independent Sri Lanka failed to "weld together" the diverse ethnic and religious communities to form a united pluralistic state, Ms. Kumaratunga said.

Historically, the island's majority Sinhala-Buddhist community had felt discriminated against by the colonial rulers. "Although Independence gave the majority community an opportunity to correct this, sadly that did not happen," she added.

"The solution they adopted was to arrogate all the privileges of economic and social development exclusively to themselves," the two-time President said.

Sri Lanka's present Constitution, introduced by President J.R. Jayewardene in 1978, "is not a democratic one", Ms. Kumaratunga contended, recalling how her own draft proposals for a new Constitution in 2000, widely considered progressive, could not be taken forward owing to lack of support.

'Root causes'

Outlining the "root causes" for Sri Lanka's failures, she said that while the country functions as a modern, emerging economy financially, it is "mired in the practices of a backward, semi-feudal society", in the social and cultural spheres. "Eleven out of the 14 people that have governed Sri Lanka until now have hailed from five families," she said, in an apparently self-critical reference to the country's famous ruling clans, including her own family. All main political parties invariably played the "ethno-religious card" in every election, she added.

Referring to last year's historic street protests, Ms. Kumaratunga said "a cataclysmic socio-political upheaval shook the nation to its very core".

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GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY

ASKUS

Bhavana Acharya

Q I have been investing in two Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) of ₹2,000 each from April 2021 (Parag Parikh Flexi Cap) and May 2021 (Axis Bluechip). So far, the total invested amount is ₹78,097. The recent returns in the Flexi cap fund are 4% (₹1,580) and in the Bluechip fund is (-) 4.23% (₹-1,629). What does this return indicate? What steps can I take to improve the return?
HARI SRIKAR

A When you look at returns of a mutual fund, you need to look at the market as well. Equity markets have been flat over 2022 and have been correcting over the past few months as well. This reflects in fund performance as well; an equity fund can hardly deliver outstanding returns when stocks are going through a sharp correction.
To provide context, a Systematic Investment Plan in the Nifty 50 index in the same period as your SIP would have delivered a 2.2% return.
An SIP in the wide-market Nifty 500 index would have returned 0.75%. Stock market corrections and volatility are par for the course; for every downward market phase there will also be a recovery.
The risk in equity investing lies in this volatility and is something you need to be willing to hold investments through. So, as long as your fund is a quality long-term performer and beats its benchmark index, you should continue to invest in it.
To invest in equity funds, you need to have at least a 5-7 year time-frame and be prepared for losses or low returns in that time. SIPs in correcting markets are very useful in investing when prices are low - bringing down your costs and therefore improving returns when markets recover.

Q I am a central government employee with an in-hand salary of ₹51,000 and am aged 27. I want to construct a house with some ₹20 lakh in the next 2-3 years. I have a Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) in the following funds:
1. Navi Nifty 50 – ₹3,000
2. MiraeAsset Tax Saver – ₹4,000
3. Axis Small Cap – ₹3,000
4. Quant Tax Plan – ₹2,000
5. SBI Focused Equity – ₹1,000
I have ₹1,20,000 in fixed deposits. Please help in rebalancing the mutual funds.
NITIN MAURYA

A If you intend to use the funds to construct a house in the next two-to-three years, they are not suitable unless you have already been investing in them for at least 3-4 years. For one, equity funds are best used for medium to long-term goals only as they can be volatile in shorter-term periods; market returns in the past couple of years have been flat.
Second, they are tax-saver funds that have lock-ins.
Every Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) instalment will be locked in for 3 years. You may thus be unable to access much of this investment if you need it in 2-3 years.
Third, close to half the funds are high-risk, tilting towards mid-cap and small-cap stocks or that have aggressive strategies. This is an extremely high allocation that leaves your portfolio more vulnerable to market corrections.
This holds true regardless of your time-frame and even if you do not plan to use these investments for your house. So unless you push the planned construction by at least 2-3 more years, it's best to divert at least part of your monthly investment into safer avenues.
Check which of the old or new tax regimes will minimise your tax outgo. Then, invest in a mix of fixed deposits (especially if you do not have to bear taxes or you are in the lowest tax bracket), debt mutual funds, and hybrid funds such as balanced advantage or equity savings funds.
If you don't intend to use these funds for construction, you still need to reduce the risk.
Consolidate tax saver funds into one, and re-allocate the SIPs in the aggressive funds into the Nifty 50 index.
(The writer is Co-founder, Primeinvestor.in)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

It's time to plan your investments, finances

The old tax regime exists with exemptions wherein you can invest in those avenues and reduce your tax outgo; under the new tax regime, the rates are lower, but exemptions are not available

TAX MATH

Joydeep Sen

> Under the old regime, provided you make certain minimum tax-saving investments, you would break-even with the new regime

We are used to the 'March phenomenon' i.e., the rush for tax-saving investments in March to reduce the tax payable for the financial year. However, that approach is set to change gradually. Now there is an existing or old tax regime with exemptions available where you can invest in those avenues and reduce your tax outgo.

New versus old
When we say exemptions, we mean the "usual suspects" such as Section 80C, 80D, housing loan interest, HRA, education loan interest and leave travel allowance. And there is a new tax regime where the tax rates per se are lower, but exemptions are not available.

As of today, both the old and new regimes co-exist. It is your choice as to under which one you will pay your taxes i.e. claim exemptions and pay tax at relatively higher rates, or forget exemptions and pay tax at a relatively lower rate.

However, figuring out which one is better, the old or the new tax regime, is a professional's job.

You have to consult your chartered accountant to figure that out. Broadly, how it works is that you have an estimate of how much you will earn over the financial year. If you are in a salaried job, the estimate is easier. If you are a practising professional or in business, you have to make an estimate based on last year's earnings.

Your chartered accountant could give you an estimate of the "break-even" between the old and new tax regimes. Under the old regime, provided you make certain minimum tax-saving investments, you would break-even with the new regime.

Then you have to figure out whether you want to, or you are in a position to execute all those investments.

If the old regime seems better for you, then you have to plan your cash flows. Rather than waiting for March 2024, it is better to even out the cash outflows over the course of the year.

There is no compulsion to execute those tax saving investments. You may not have the need for it, other than tax planning. You may not like those investments for certain reasons.

In that case, you can simply settle for the new tax regime. In the absence of all those investments, the new regime is better for you. The point we want to drive home through this piece is that for the investments you make, tax planning is only one of the reasons, not the sole reason.

Default option
As per the government, the new tax rate regime is the "default" option now and the old tax regime is only one of the "options" with you.

The government is gradually disincentivising tax efficiency as the driver for investments. Earlier, ULIP premiums beyond ₹2.5 lakh per year were made taxable. In the latest Union Budget, insurance premium payments beyond ₹5 lakh per year have been made taxable, on the returns earned. Indexation benefit on debt mutual fund investments has been done away with in the latest Union Budget.

It is possible that somewhere down the line, though nobody knows when as of today, tax-saving-investments e.g. Section 80C, may be done away altogether. If that be the case, this is the preparatory phase for us.

On your part, you have to gradually develop that mindset and approach. Buy insurance, because it is required for you, not because of the tax breaks. Buy term insurance, rather than unit-linked-insurance-policy (ULIP) as that is pure insurance whereas ULIPs combine insurance and investments, at a higher cost to you.

Investment decision
Buy property, because you want to stay there or you want to own a second home, not because of the tax breaks. Invest in debt mutual funds, not because the tax rate on returns is lower, but because you require it in your portfolio.

Once you declutter your mind from the tax efficiency aspect, you would be able to take a pure, undiluted view on why you have to spend your money on a particular investment.

If you phase it out over the course of the year, like the concept of the systematic investment plan (SIP) in mutual funds, it will be easier on your cash flows.

(The writer is a corporate trainer and author)

Should you invest based on fund size?

THINKINVESTOR

The larger the fund size, the lower the total expense ratio (TER). A large AUM could be optimal for an index fund as it can generate returns closer to the index due to lower TER

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

When you want to validate your choice of a consumer durable, checking online stores helps to understand how many individuals have bought the same product. The more the buyers, the better the product ought to be, compared with its peers. Can you apply the same logic in choosing equity funds? With equity funds, the parallel argument would be to observe assets under management (AUM). Do large AUMs translate to better investment returns? In this article, we discuss why large AUMs can be good for passive funds but not necessarily so for active funds.

Alpha strategy always scalable?
Take index funds and exchange-traded funds (ETFs). These are passive funds mandated to mirror their benchmark index. Importantly, these funds can only buy stocks that are part of their benchmark. Your return on an index fund is approximately the benchmark return less the total expense ratio or TER. Now, larger the fund size, typically lower the TER. Therefore, large AUM could be optimal for an index fund as it can generate returns closer to the index because of lower TER.

Large AUMs could be good for ETFs too. Greater the AUM, more the units available for trading in the market. And greater the volumes traded, lower the difference between the buying and the selling prices (bid-ask spread). Lower spread is an indicator for good liquidity; the more liquid a traded security is, the more likely you will be able to transact at the last traded price (low slippage cost).

What about active funds? Your primary reason to invest in an active fund is to earn alpha – the excess returns that an active fund can generate over its benchmark index. Suppose a mid-cap fund attracts fresh capital inflow from investors because of good performance. The portfolio manager may have to invest the capital in a similar set of stocks. But such stocks may have increased in price, thereby, lowering the potential for alpha generation.

Alpha strategy is not always scalable – a strategy that works for an AUM of ₹5,000 crore may not be successful for an AUM of, say, ₹10,000 crore. The NAV growth reflects only the gains generated by a mutual fund. Therefore, comparing NAV returns to the fund's benchmark over 3-, 5- and 10-year periods is a good starting point for your analysis of active funds.

(The writer offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks				
AU Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.35	8.00	7.20
Capital Small Finance Bank	7.60	7.15	7.15	7.10
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.50	8.20	8.00	7.25
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.50	6.00	6.75	6.25
Fincare Small Finance Bank	8.41	7.50	8.00	8.00
Jana Small Finance Bank	8.15	7.25	7.35	6.00
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.51	6.85	7.25	7.50
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	8.25	6.50	7.20	7.20
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.25	7.75	7.50	7.50
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	7.26	6.75	7.00	7.00
Bandhan Bank	8.00	7.25	7.25	5.85
CSB Bank	7.50	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	7.50	6.25	6.50	6.50
DCB Bank	8.00	7.25	7.60	7.60
HDFC Bank	7.10	6.60	7.00	7.00
ICICI Bank	7.10	6.70	7.00	7.00
IDFC First Bank	7.75	6.75	7.75	7.00
IndusInd Bank	7.75	7.50	7.75	7.25
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	7.10	7.10	6.50	6.50
Karnataka Bank	7.30	7.00	6.50	6.50
Karur Vysya Bank	7.50	7.00	7.00	6.25
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.20	7.00	6.50	6.20
Nainital Bank	7.05	6.70	6.25	5.75
SBM Bank India	7.75	6.40	7.30	7.75
South Indian Bank	7.40	6.60	6.50	6.00
Tamilnad Mercantile	8.00	7.25	6.50	6.50
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	7.05	6.75	6.75	6.50
Bank of India	7.15	6.00	6.50	6.00
Bank of Maharashtra	7.00	6.25	6.00	5.75
Canara Bank	7.25	7.00	6.80	6.70
Central Bank of India	7.10	6.75	6.25	6.25
Indian Bank	7.10*	6.10	6.25	6.25
Indian Overseas Bank	7.25	6.50	6.50	6.50
Punjab National Bank	7.25	6.80	7.00	6.50
Punjab & Sind Bank	7.10	6.40	6.25	6.25
State Bank of India	7.10	6.80	6.50	6.50
Union Bank of India	7.30	6.30	7.30	6.70
Foreign Banks				
Deutsche Bank	7.75	7.00	7.75	7.25

Note: *7.15% p.a. interest rate for women depositors
Source:Paisabazaar.com

Home Loan Interest Rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
			(In %)
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India*	8.50-10.15	8.50-10.05	8.50-10.05
Bank of Baroda	9.15-10.65	9.15-10.65	9.15-10.90
Union Bank of India	9.00-10.75	9.00-10.95	9.00-10.95
Punjab National Bank	8.65-9.60	8.60-9.50	8.60-9.50
Bank of India	9.25-10.75	9.25-10.75	9.25-10.75
Canara Bank	8.85-11.25	8.85-11.25	8.85-11.25
UCO Bank	8.45-10.30	8.45-10.30	8.45-10.30
Bank of Maharashtra**	8.40-10.65	8.40-11.20	8.40-11.20
Punjab and Sind Bank	8.85-9.95	8.85-9.95	8.85-9.95
Indian Overseas Bank	8.85 onwards	8.85 onwards	8.85 onwards
Indian Bank	8.45-10.40	8.45-10.40	8.45-10.40
Central Bank of India	8.45-9.80	8.45-9.80	8.45-9.80
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	8.85 onwards	8.85 onwards	8.85 onwards
ICICI Bank	9.00-9.80	9.00-9.95	9.00-10.05
Axis Bank	8.75-12.70	8.75-12.70	8.75-9.15
HSBC Bank	8.60 onwards	8.60 onwards	8.60 onwards
South Indian Bank	9.85-12.60	9.85-12.60	9.85-12.60
Karur Vysya Bank	9.23-12.13	9.23-12.13	9.23-12.13
Karnataka Bank	9.26-10.43	9.26-10.43	9.26-10.53
Federal Bank	10.15-10.20	10.20-10.25	10.25-10.30
Dhanlaxmi Bank	9.35-10.50	9.35-10.50	9.35-10.50
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	9.10-9.60	9.10-9.60	9.10-9.60
Bandhan Bank	9.15-15.00	9.15-13.32	9.15-13.32
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	8.60-10.35	8.60-10.55	8.60-10.75
HDFC Ltd.	8.50-10.35	8.50-10.60	8.50-10.70
Bajaj Housing Finance	8.70 onwards	8.70 onwards	8.70 onwards
Tata Capital	9.15 onwards	9.15 onwards	9.15 onwards
PNB Housing Finance	8.75-14.50	8.75-13.00	8.75-11.35
GIC Housing Finance	8.45 onwards	8.45 onwards	8.45 onwards
Repco Home Finance	9.60 onwards	9.60 onwards	9.60 onwards
Aditya Birla Capital	8.80-14.75	8.80-14.75	8.80-14.75
ICICI Home Finance	9.20 onwards	9.20 onwards	9.20 onwards

***Concession of 0.10% on the applicable interest rates for Shaurya and Shaurya Flexi Home Loans**
****Concession of 0.05% in applicable interest rate to women borrowers and armed forces personnel subject to minimum floor ceiling of RLLR**
Rates as on April 14 **Source:Paisabazaar.com**

TIMING

Rahul Tewatia credits chance for his 'finisher' label

Rahul Tewatia yet again showcased his prowess as a finisher during Gujarat Titans' midweek encounter versus Punjab Kings. But he admitted that he became a finisher by chance in 2020, when he tonked Sheldon Cottrell for five sixes in an over while representing the Royals. "It was that innings in Sharjah that was responsible," he said.

EMULATING HIS FATHER

Arjun Tendulkar makes his IPL debut against Knight Riders

Arjun Tendulkar made his IPL debut on Sunday bowling for Mumbai Indians, the team once captained by his illustrious batsman father Sachin Tendulkar. The 23-year-old left-hander was given the new ball in the match against Kolkata Knight Riders at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium.

PREVENTIVE MEASURE

Hardik's way to avoid injuring his palm when bowling

You may have noticed Hardik Pandya wearing a glove in his left hand, even while fielding over the last couple of years. It's not due to injury, but a preventive measure. He has a tendency to stomp his left palm on his left knee every time he bowls. In order to avoid a swollen or a bruised palm, Hardik has found a way out by wearing a glove.

FLEXIBLE MINDSET

I just try and deliver in the role assigned to me, says Padikkal

Devdutt Padikkal's batting position is being discussed ever since the Rajasthan Royals has used him in middle order. The stylish batter reiterated that he is not fussy about the batting position. "The role obviously changes with different batting positions but it's not in my hands, so I just try and deliver in the role assigned to me," he said.

Venkatesh's ton in vain as Mumbai Indians downs KKR

Ishan and Suryakumar dash the visitors' hopes as the bowlers, barring Suyash, fail to make an impact; Rohit, coming in as Impact Player, is involved in a tone-setting 65-run opening partnership

IPL-16

Shayan Acharya
MUMBAI

Venkatesh Iyer made it to the record books on Sunday as he became the second Kolkata Knight Riders cricketer, after Brendon McCullum, to score a century (104, 51b, 6x4, 9x6) in the Indian Premier League.

On a Wankhede Stadium surface where the batters struggled against cutters and slower deliveries, Venkatesh rode on some clean hitting to bring up his maiden ton and also guided KKR to 185 for six.

Heartbreak

But at the end, it was heartbreak for the visiting side as Mumbai Indians rode on Ishan Kishan's half-century and a crucial 43 (25b, 4x4, 3x6) by Suryakumar Yadav to clinch a five-wicket win.

Venkatesh's innings had given KKR hope but as the game progressed, things went MI's way with the KKR bowlers, barring spinner Suyash Sharma (two for 27), failing to make an impact.

After struggling in the first three games, Suryakumar, leading MI as Rohit Sharma had to sit out in the first innings due to a stomach bug, stepped up when it mattered and forged two crucial partnerships – a 60 with Tilak Varma and a 29-run stand with Tim David – to guide the team home with 14 balls to spare.

Chasing a tall total, Rohit came in as Impact Player, replacing Riley Meredith, and forged a 65-run opening partnership with Kishan, before a screamer of a catch by Umesh Yadav off Suyash sent him back to the dugout.

Losing the plot

But Suryakumar and Kishan showed resilience and even after Kishan was cleaned up by Varun Chakravarthy, Suryakumar stood firm and eventually got the team closer to the target.

However, KKR would be disappointed with the way it lost the plot despite Venkatesh's heroics.

MI handed a debut to Arjun Tendulkar, who opened the proceedings and conceded 17 runs in two overs. But it was Cameron Green, who struck first and dismissed N. Jagadeesan for a duck.

Piyush Chawla and Hrithik Shokeen tightened the noose as neither Rahmanullah Gurbaz nor Nitish Rana could make an impression.

But Venkatesh overcame the challenging conditions and rebuilt. But after he fell to Meredith, KKR could score only 45 runs in the last five overs.

Thrust and counter-thrust: Ishan and Suryakumar played decisive innings to put in the shade a massive effort by Venkatesh. K.R. DEEPAK

SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
Rahmanullah Gurbaz c Jansen b Chawla 8 (*12b*), N. Jagadeesan c Shokeen b Green 0 (*5b*), Venkatesh Iyer c Jansen b Meredith 104 (*51b, 6x4, 9x6*), Nitish Rana c sub (Ramandeep) b Shokeen 5 (*10b*), Shardul Thakur c Tilak Varma b Shokeen 13 (*11b, 1x4*), Rinku Singh c Wadhera b Jansen 18 (*18b, 2x4*), Andre Russell (not out) 21 (*11b, 3x4, 1x6*), Sunil Narine (not out) 2 (*2b*); Extras (lb-2, w-12): 14; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 185.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-11 (Jagadeesan, 1.5 overs), 2-57 (Gurbaz, 5.3), 3-73 (Rana, 8.1), 4-123 (Shardul, 12.5), 5-159 (Venkatesh, 17.2), 6-172 (Rinku, 18.5).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Arjun Tendulkar 2-0-17-0, Green 2-0-20-1, Jansen 4-0-53-1, Chawla 4-0-19-1, Shokeen 4-0-34-2, Meredith 4-0-40-1.

MUMBAI INDIANS
Rohit Sharma **(Impact Player in place of Meredith)** c Umesh b Suyash 20 (*13b, 1x4, 2x6*), Ishan Kishan b Varun 58 (*25b, 5x4, 5x6*), Suryakumar Yadav c Gurbaz b Shardul 43 (*25b, 4x4, 3x6*), Tilak Varma b Suyash 30 (*25b, 3x4, 1x6*), Tim David (not out) 24 (*13b, 1x4, 2x6*), Nehal Wadhera c Gurbaz b Ferguson 6 (*4b, 1x4*), Cameron Green (not out) 1 (*1b*); Extras (w-4): 4; Total (for five wkts. in 17.4 overs): 186.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-65 (Rohit, 4.5 overs), 2-87 (Kishan, 7.3), 3-147 (Tilak, 13.5), 4-176 (Suryakumar, 16.3), 5-184 (Wadhera, 17.2).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING
Umesh 2-0-19-0, Shardul 2-0-25-1, Narine 3-0-41-0, Suyash **(Impact Player in place of Venkatesh)** 4-0-27-2, Varun 4-0-38-1, Ferguson 1.4-0-19-1, Russell 1-0-17-0.

Toss: MI; **PoM:** Venkatesh Iyer.
Mumbai Indians won by five wickets with 14 balls to spare.

Next assignment

MI: April 18 **vs. SRH**
Hyderabad, 7.30 p.m.

KKR: April 20 **vs. DC**
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

Points Table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	5	4	1	8	1.354
Lucknow Super Giants	5	3	2	6	0.761
Gujarat Titans	5	3	2	6	0.192
Punjab Kings	5	3	2	6	-0.109
Kolkata Knight Riders	5	2	3	4	0.320
Chennai Super Kings	4	2	2	4	0.225
Royal Challengers Bangalore	4	2	2	4	-0.316
Mumbai Indians	4	2	2	4	-0.389
Sunrisers Hyderabad	4	2	2	4	-0.822
Delhi Capitals	5	0	5	0	-1.488

After the GT-RR match on April 16

Hetmyer and Samson's blistering knocks help Royals trump Titans for the first time

Amol Karhadkar
AHMEDABAD

Sanju Samson gave Rajasthan Royals hope with a captain's knock before Shimron Hetmyer played a trademark blinder to help the team avenge the 2022 Final loss against Gujarat Titans in style.

Riding on the duo's power-packed innings, Royals crossed the target of 178 runs with four balls to spare at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Sunday.

Defeat looming

When Hetmyer took guard, Royals were tottering at 55 for four in the 11th over and a fourth consecutive defeat versus Titans was looming large.

But Samson – timing the ball beautifully – started clearing the fence effortlessly. His hat-trick of sixes off Rashid Khan was a treat to watch.

Hetmyer soon joined the party and went after fellow West Indian Alzarri Joseph's pace.

Even after Samson perished to left-arm wrist spinner Noor Ahmad – debuting in IPL as an Impact Player – Hetmyer continued to control the chase.

Sealed with a six! Hetmyer conjured up a whirlwind half-century to help Royals notch up their fourth win of the season. VIJAY SONEJI

Despite Mohammed Shami accounting for Dhruv Jurel and R. Ashwin in the penultimate over, crucial hits by the lower order batters meant Hetmyer had to score seven runs off the last over.

Next assignment

RR: April 19 **vs. LSG**
Jaipur, 7.30 p.m.

GT: April 22 **vs. LSG**
Lucknow, 3.30 p.m.

It took him two balls off Noor to complete the formalities, fittingly ending the chase with a six over wide long-on.

Earlier in the evening, Shubman Gill played the sheet anchor role to near-perfection, captain Hardik Pandya pressed the accelerator in the middle, and Abhinav Manohar and David Miller provided the final flourish.

As a result, the Titans notched up 177 for seven.

However, the fact that the Royals bowlers ensured the innings didn't have a decisive or long partnership meant it turned out to be an essay without a peak.

SCOREBOARD

GUJARAT TITANS
Wriddhiman Saha c & b Boult 4 (*3b, 1x4*), Shubman Gill c Buttler b Sandeep 45 (*34b, 4x4, 1x6*), B. Sai Sudharsan run out 20 (*19b, 2x4*), Hardik Pandya c Jaiswal b Chahal 28 (*19b, 3x4, 1x6*), David Miller c Hetmyer b Sandeep 46 (*30b, 3x4, 2x6*), Abhinav Manohar c Padikkal **(Impact Player for Yuzvendra Chahal)** b Zampa 27 (*13b, 3x6*), Rahul Tewatia (not out) 1 (*1b*), Rashid Khan run out 1 (*1b*), Alzarri Joseph (not out) 0 (*0b*); Extras (lb-1, w-4): 5; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 177.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-5 (Saha, 0.3 overs), 2-32 (Sudharsan, 4.6), 3-91 (Hardik, 10.3), 4-121 (Gill, 15.2), 5-166 (18.6, Abhinav), 6-175 (Miller, 19.4), 7-176 (Rashid, 19.5).

ROYALS BOWLING
Boult 4-0-46-1, Sandeep 4-0-25-2, Zampa 4-0-32-1, Ashwin 4-0-37-0, Chahal 4-0-36-1.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS
Yashasvi Jaiswal c Gill b Hardik 1 (*7b*), Jos Buttler b Shami 0 (*5b*), Devdutt Padikkal c Mohit b Rashid 26 (*25b, 2x4, 2x6*), Sanju Samson c Miller b Noor **(Impact Player for Shubman Gill)** 60 (*32b, 3x4, 6x6*), Riyan Parag c Miller b Rashid 5 (*7b*), Shimron Hetmyer (not out) 56 (*26b, 2x4, 5x6*), Dhruv Jurel c Mohit b Shami 18 (*10b, 2x4, 1x6*), R. Ashwin c Tewatia b Shami 10 (*3b, 1x4, 1x6*), Trent Boult (not out) 0 (*1b*); Extras (lb-1, w-2): 3; Total (for seven wkts. in 19.2 overs): 179.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-2 (Jaiswal, 1.3 overs), 2-4 (Buttler, 2.5), 3-47 (Padikkal, 8.3), 4-55 (Parag, 10.3), 5-114 (Samson, 14.6), 6-161 (Jurel, 18.2), 7-171 (Ashwin, 18.5).

TITANS BOWLING
Shami 4-1-25-3, Hardik 4-0-24-1, Joseph 3-0-47-0, Rashid 4-0-46-2, Mohit 2-0-7-0, Noor 2.2-0-29-1.

Toss: Royals; **PoM:** Hetmyer.
Royals won by three wickets with four balls to spare

Arsenal squanders points in another damaging draw

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Arsenal blew a two-goal lead for the second game in a row as Bukayo Saka's penalty miss proved crucial in the Premier League leaders' damaging 2-2 draw against West Ham on Sunday.

Mikel Arteta's side struck twice in the first 10 minutes at the London Stadium thanks to goals from Gabriel Jesus and Martin Odegaard.

But just seven days after squandering a 2-0 advantage in their 2-2 draw at Liverpool, the Gunners again cracked under the pressure of the title race.

Said Benrahma's penalty reduced the deficit for West Ham before the interval and after Saka fired his spot-kick wide early in the second half, Jarrod Bowen volleyed in an equaliser for the struggling hosts.

Manchester United beat relegation-threatened Nottingham Forest 2-0 on Sunday to strengthen their push for a top-four Premier League finish.

Meanwhile, a subdued Barcelona could not break down Getafe in a 0-0 draw on Sunday, leaving it 11 points clear of Real Madrid at the top of LaLiga.

The results:

Premier League: West Ham 2 (Benrahma 33-pen, Bowen 54) drew with Arsenal 2 (Jesus 7, Odegaard 10); Nottingham Forest 0 lost to Manchester United 2 (Antony 32, Dalot 76).

LaLiga: Getafe 0 drew with Barcelona 0.

On Saturday: Premier League: Tottenham 2 (Son 14, Danjuma 88) lost to Bournemouth 3 (Vina 38, Solanke 51, Ouattara 90+5).

LaLiga: Cadiz 0 lost to Real Madrid 2 (Nacho 72, Asensio 76).

Serie A: Inter Milan 0 lost to Monza 1 (Caldirola 78); Napoli 0 drew with Verona 0.

Costly miss: Arsenal's Saka fails to score from the spot. AP

INBRIEF

Rublev bests Hune to claim his maiden Masters 1000 title

Russia's Andrey Rublev fought back against Denmark's Holger Rune to win his first Masters 1000 title in Monte Carlo on Sunday. The fifth seed rallied from 4-1 down in the deciding set to defeat sixth-seeded teenager Rune 5-7, 6-2, 7-5 after one hour 34 minutes on the red clay of Court Rainier III. Rublev, 25, claimed the biggest win of his career after losing Masters finals in Monte Carlo and Cincinnati, both in 2021.

Karunaratne, Mendis in record stand for Sri Lanka

Captain Dimuth Karunaratne and Kusal Mendis scored centuries and shared a record partnership for the second wicket to give Sri Lanka an imposing 386 for four at stumps on the opening day of the first Test on Sunday. Having won the toss and electing to bat first, Sri Lanka got off to a decent start with Karunaratne sharing 64 runs for the opening wicket with Nishan Madushka (29). Mendis joined Karunaratne and the pair shared 281 runs for the second wicket, the highest partnership for any wicket at Galle after surpassing 267 runs scored for the fifth wicket by Mohammad Ashraful and Mushfiqur Rahim of Bangladesh 10 years ago. Karunaratne reached his 15th century playing in his 85th match.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 386/4 in 88 overs (Dimuth Karunaratne 179, Kusal Mendis 140) vs Ireland **Toss**: Sri Lanka.

Anirudh and Vijay finish runner-up in Split Challenger

Top seeds Sadio Doumbia and Fabien Reboul of France beat Anirudh Chandrasekar and Vijay Sundar Prashanth 6-4, 6-4 in the doubles final of the €73,000 Challenger tennis tournament in Split, Croatia. The champion team won €4,250 and 75 ATP points, while the Indian duo pocketed 50 points and €2,450.

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: MTV, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 5.30 a.m.

Sri Lanka vs Ireland: 1st Test, day 2, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10 a.m.

World Chess championship: FIDE & *Chess.com YouTube* channels, 2.30 p.m. onwards

Super Cup football: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 5 & 8.30 p.m.

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.

Pakistan vs New Zealand: 3rd T20I, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 9.30 p.m.

Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 12.15 a.m. (Tuesday)

LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

A heavyweight battle that is bound to set pulses racing

Traditional rivals Royal Challengers Bangalore and Chennai Super Kings likely to offer a thrill-a-minute fare as a galaxy of stars in both teams will make the occasion more special

IPL-16

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

A packed house at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium will raise the roof when Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) takes on Chennai Super Kings in a marquee IPL clash here on Monday.

The traditional rivals from South India will offer a thrill-a-minute fare. A galaxy of stars in both teams will only make the occasion more special.

CSK skipper M.S. Dhoni, whose appeal cuts across team colours, will command the most attention. Dhoni's unbeaten 17-ball 32 almost helped his side pull off a win in the previous match against Rajasthan Royals.

Stirring panic

Even when batting at No. 8, Dhoni can turn the match on its head and stir panic in the opposition.

Dhoni is firing despite carrying a knee injury. The wicketkeeper-batter is "managing the injury as best as he can," CSK batting coach Michael Hussey said on Saturday.

CSK will be without the services of all-rounder Ben Stokes, who is down with a heel injury. Hussey stated that Stokes will make his return only when fully fit.

Win in previous game

RCB enters this fixture on the back of a win over Delhi Capitals here on Saturday.

RCB pacer V. Vyshak, playing his first IPL match, impressed with a three-wicket haul.

Vyshak will relish the chance to once again take in the plaudits on his home turf.

On the batting front, Virat Kohli, Faf du Plessis and Glenn Maxwell pose a serious threat to the CSK attack.

This heavyweight battle is bound to set pulses racing.

Game-changer: Dhoni can turn the match on its head even if he comes down the order. K. MURALI KUMAR

Today's match

Bengaluru, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 30
RCB 10 | CSK 19 | NR 1

PREVIOUS MEETING
RCB won by **13 runs**, 2022

Bengaluru FC held by Blasters, but ensures last-four spot

SUPER CUP

P.K. Ajith Kumar
KOZHIKODE

Finally, there was a full house for a Super Cup match. Most of them were cheering for Kerala Blasters, the club from their home State, but they were in for a big disappointment, as the 1-1 draw just wasn't enough.

For the Bengaluru men, that turned out to be a perfect result, as it was able to top Group A and thus clinched the semifinal spot. They should, however, thank RoundGlass Punjab, which defeated Sreenidi Deccan 1-0 at Manjeri. That meant Bengaluru finished with five points, one ahead of Sreenidi and Blasters.

Bengaluru and Blasters were coming face-to-face after their acrimonious match last month in the ISL play-off, in which the latter had walked off over a decision by the referee. So right from the time the groupings for the Super Cup were announced, this was the match that football fans were looking forward to.

The match didn't disappoint, as both sides produced some fine end-to-end football. It was Bengaluru that showed more urgency early on.

Roy Krishna . K. RAGESH

And Bengaluru went ahead in the 23rd minute, through Roy Krishna. He was set up by Javi Hernandez with a superb pass. Roy beat the goalkeeper Sachin Suresh, and the defender on the goalline Victor Mongil couldn't avoid the calamity.

Blasters' efforts for the equaliser bore fruit with Diamantakos Dimitrios, following a cross from the right by Hormipam Ruivah.

The results: Bengaluru FC 1 (Roy Krishna 23) drew with Kerala Blasters 1 (Diamantakos Dimitrios 77); RoundGlass Punjab 1 (Hmingthanmawia 41) bt Sreenidi Deccan 0.

Prize money hike for domestic tournaments

CRICKET

Sports Bureau
AHMEDABAD

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced a substantial hike in prize money for senior domestic tournaments for men and women.

While the hike in men's prize money ranges between 60 per cent and 300 per cent, the two women's tournaments have seen a hike in excess of 700 per cent.

For the men's circuit, the Ranji Trophy champion team will now take home ₹5 crore (existing ₹2 crore), while the losing finalist and the semifinalists will earn ₹3 crore (₹1 crore) and ₹1 crore (₹ 50 lakh), respectively.

The one-day champion and the runners-up will get ₹1 crore (₹ 30 lakh) and ₹50 lakh (₹ 15 lakh) from now. The domestic T20 tournament has got the most hike in terms of prize money. The revision was announced by BCCI secretary Jay Shah on his social media handle.

The women's senior one-day and T20 trophy champion and runners-up will finally start earning a significant prize money, instead of a notional amount that was handed over till date.

As a result, the one-day champion outfit will earn ₹50 lakh (₹6 lakh) while the T20 champion side will be rewarded with ₹40 lakh (₹5 lakh).

The prize money revision:
Men's Ranji Trophy: **Winner**: ₹5 crore (₹3 crore), **Runners-up**: ₹3 crore (₹1 crore), **Losing semifinalists**: ₹1 crore (₹ 50 lakh); **Irani Cup**: **Winner**: ₹50 lakh (₹25 lakh), **Runners-up**: ₹25 lakh (Nil); **Duleep Trophy**: **Winner**: Rs. 1 crore (₹ 40 lakh), **Runners-up**: ₹50 lakh (₹ 20 lakh); **Vijay Hazare Trophy**: **Winner**: ₹1 crore (Rs. 30 lakh), **Runners-up**: ₹50 lakh (₹ 15 lakh); **Prof. D.B. Deodhar Trophy**: ₹40 lakh (₹20 lakh), ₹20 lakh (₹ 15 lakh); **Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy**: ₹80 lakh (₹25 lakh), ₹40 lakh (₹10 lakh).
Women: **Senior one-day trophy**: ₹50 lakh (₹6 lakh), ₹25 lakh (₹3 lakh); **Senior T20 trophy**: ₹40 lakh (₹ 5 lakh), ₹20 lakh (₹ 3 lakh).

Brijbhushan not to contest in the WFI elections

WRESTLING

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has decided to hold its elections on May 7 in Delhi. The beleaguered WFI chief, Brijbhushan Sharan Singh, against whom some prominent wrestlers leveled several charges, will not contest for the post of president.

"The elections will be held on May 7. Since he (Brijbhushan) has completed three terms (12 years) as the president, he has to take a break (as per the Sports Code)," said WFI secretary V.N. Prasood following the federation's special general body meeting and executive body meeting at Gonda, alongside the National Open Ranking Tournament and the National under-17 championships which began on Sunday.

Brijbhushan is 66 years old and the upper age limit, in normal course, for holding a post of an office-bearer or board member in a National Sports Federation is 70 years.

Oversight committee

The Sports Ministry had formed an Oversight Committee to look into various allegations, including sexual harassment, leveled by the wrestlers against Brijbhushan and had asked him step aside from the day-to-day functioning of the federation. The committee also looked after the daily work of the WFI during the enquiry.

After the committee submitted its report to the Government, some WFI office-bearers, including Prasood, began functioning a few weeks back.

Now, the WFI will have a new president following the elections.

The conduct of the Open Ranking event, which was stopped midway after the freestyle competitions in January following a directive from the Ministry due to the controversy, and the under-17 event marked the resumption of wrestling competitions in the country.

Enjoy the high-voltage atmosphere, Hussey tells team

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) batting coach Michael Hussey called on his team to enjoy the high-voltage atmosphere expected in the IPL match against Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) here on Monday.

"The players are looking forward to it. It's always a great occasion, especially when playing here. RCB has a fantastic team. They will take some confidence from their win on Saturday.

"We have to be at our best to get a win. We've had some classic contests in the past, so we are expecting nothing different this time. The main message to our players is to enjoy it. You don't get to play in these environments too often," Hussey said.

Tickets for this outing are in high demand, which led to some disturbances near the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Sunday morning.

Mike Hussey. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Several fans arrived at the stadium expecting to purchase box office tickets, but were unaware that there were no tickets up for sale.

Police personnel dispersed the agitated crowd.

There were many eager fans milling around the stadium in the evening hours as well, trying their best to source tickets.

Trust in coach very important in achieving success: Neeraj

ATHLETICS

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

With the Doha Diamond League just three weeks away, Neeraj Chopra is confident of a good beginning to what will be a longer-than-usual season.

With the postponed Asian Games scheduled for September-October, the Olympic gold medallist is focusing not just on improving his performances but also staying injury free.

"The best part of my training so far has been staying injury-free and am hoping to continue that and have a healthy season.

"Our focus will be on the main events – World Championships and the Asian Games – and for the rest, including the Diamond Leagues, we will plan with the coach to pick and decide participation, balancing competition, recovery and training," Neeraj said in an interaction on Sunday.

Raising the bar: Neeraj insists there is no let-up in his hunger for improvement despite the impressive list of achievements. AP

Training currently at the Gloria Sports Arena in Antalya (Turkey) with long-time coach Klaus Bartoniez, Neeraj said it was important for an athlete to have trust and confidence with his coach to achieve any success.

"I think that an athlete should also be aware of his own body and training suitability and must be able to talk to his coach openly. Any training decision should be consultative, not blindly one-sided, dictated by the coach.

"In an individual sport, once you enter competition, you cannot go to the coach for every thing. There are times when the coach has made a training plan but I feel I should do something else and give my opinion. We discuss our training schedule daily and if needed we decide to modify accordingly. That understanding, honesty and clarity is very important," he insisted.

For someone who has won almost every major title on offer, Neeraj insisted the hunger to keep getting better was as big as ever.

"I know there will be more pressure and expectations at the next Olympics. Yes, if you talk of medals then almost all the main titles have been ticked – it would be nice to turn the silver at the last World Championships into gold, though – but there is no deadline to it."

And while he is keen to improve on the 2022 Worlds silver, Neeraj is also aware of the lessons learnt.

"I knew after the fourth throw that something was off and I knew I should have stopped. I had spoken to the coach and physio also. But in that moment, when you want to do your best for the country and be on top all the time, it is difficult to stop and it resulted in injury. It is difficult, but something I hope to be able to do going forward – listen to the body," he said.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Tiger Cup cricket from today

The 11th edition of the Tiger Cup cricket tournament is scheduled to start on April 17. The 30-overs-a-side competition, which will be held in the under-12, under-14 and under-16 categories, will see as many as 48 teams vying for honours. The tournament will be conducted under the Cricketers For Wildlife Conservation banner.

Ajay takes the honours

C.D. Ajay of City Institute defeated S. Ankush of Indian Gymkhana 9-3 to win the singles title at the Bowring inter-club tennis tournament on Sunday.

Other results (finals):
Doubles: 35+: Mahesh Rao & Ravi Kiran Bhat (Sadashivnagar Club) bt Srinivas & Keshav Kumar (Malleswaram Club) 6-0, 6-1; **45+:** Seshgiri Kulkarni & B.V. Lokesh (Malleswaram Club) bt K. Madhan & Sandesh (Sadashivnagar Club) 3-6, 6-3, [10-5]; **55+:** Shashidhar Patel & B.V. Lokesh (Malleswaram Club) bt Sashikumar & Mahesh Karlo (Sadashivnagar Club) 6-4, 5-7, [10-8].

Navilon triumphs

Navilon, with 5.5 points,

Ajay and runner-up Ankush.

won the u-16 title in the Champions Chess Academy challenge here recently. Dhruva, with five points, came second and Lakshin took third with 4.5 points. In the u-10 category, Guhan and Nitin shared the top spot with four points each.

RIT's cricket tournament

Ramaiah Institute of Technology (RIT) will organise an All-India inter-engineering colleges cricket tournament from April 18 to 28. The competition is being held as part of the RIT Diamond Jubilee & Centenary celebrations of the founder Dr. M.S. Ramaiah.